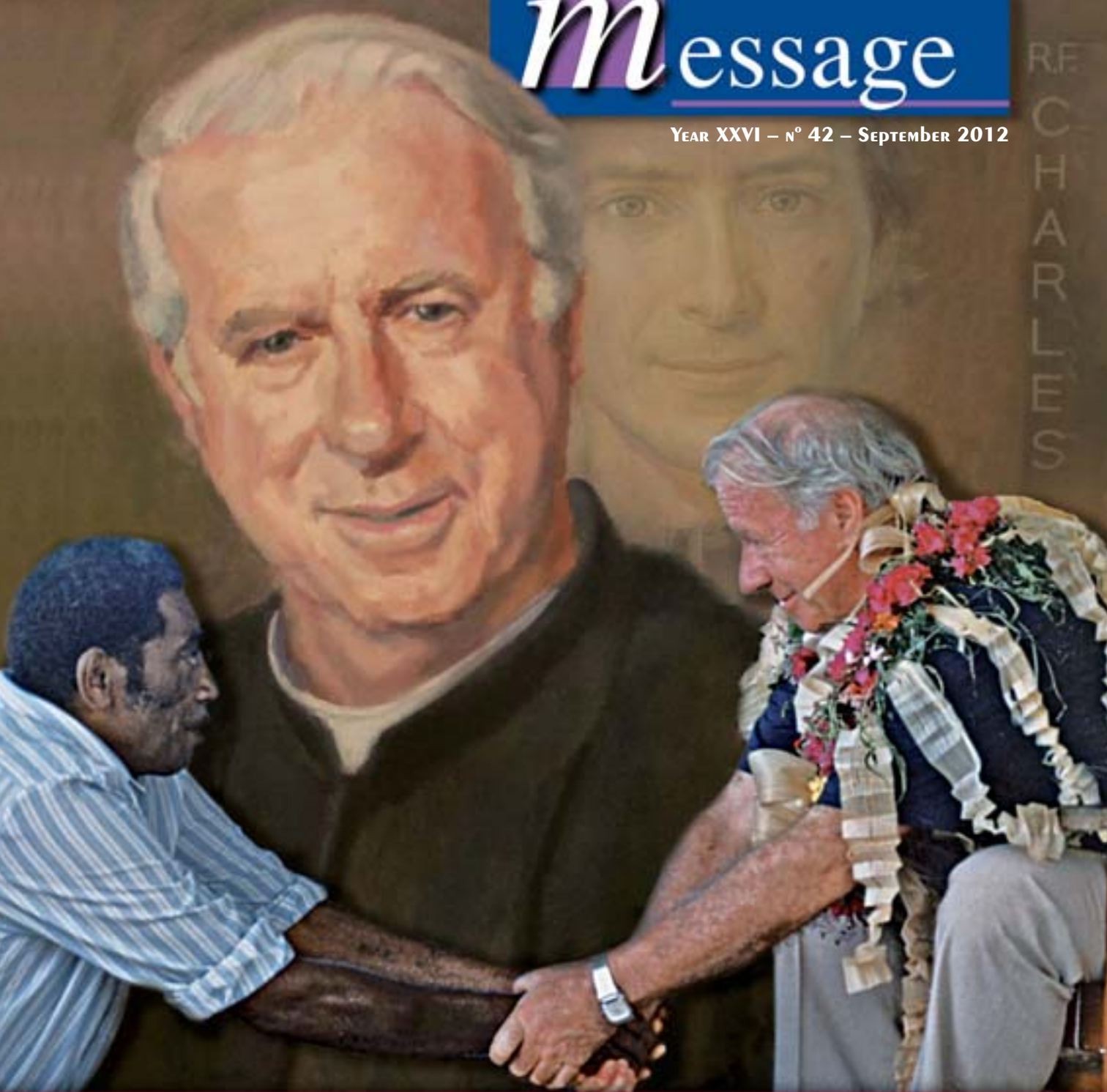


F M S
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YEAR XXVI – N° 42 – SEPTEMBER 2012

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DARING IN HOPE

BR. CHARLES HOWARD (1926-2012)
X SUPERIOR GENERAL

Year XXVI – n° 42 – September 2012

Director:

Alberto I. Ricca S. fms

Publications Commission:

Br Antonio Ramalho, Br Alberto Ricca
and Luiz Da Rosa

Translators:

Spanish:

Gabriela Scanavino, Br Moisés Puente,
Br Jack González

French:

Br Aimé Maillet, Br Joannès Fontanay,
Br Gilles Hogue, Br Josep Roura

English:

Br Edward Clisby, Br John Allen, Br
James McKnight, Br Mario Colussi

Português:

Br Aloisio Kuhn, Br Rogério Matteucci,
Br Salvador Durante, Br Afonso Levis,
Br Miro Reckziegel, Pr Eduardo Cam-
pagnani Ferreira, Ricardo Tescarolo

Formatting and Photolithography:

TIPOCROM, s.r.l.

Via A. Meucci 28,

00012 Guidonia

Roma (Italia)

Production and Administration:

Piazzale Marcelino Champagnat, 2.

C.P. 10250 – 00144 ROMA

Tel. (39) 06 54 51 71

Fax (39) 06 54 517 217

E-mail: publica@fms.it

Web: www.champagnat.org

Editor:

Institute of the Marist Brothers

Printer:

C.S.C. GRAFICA, s.r.l.

Via A. Meucci 28,

00012 Guidonia

Roma (Italia)

September 2012

index

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| A testimony and a tribute | <i>page</i> | 2 |
| <i>Br. Alberto Ricca</i> | | |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| To be Champagnat today | <i>page</i> | 3 |
| <i>Br. Emili Turú</i> | | |

1. REFLECTING ON Br. CHARLES HOWARD

| | | |
|---|-------------|----------|
| We are far richer because of your presence | <i>page</i> | 6 |
| <i>Br. Séan Sammon</i> | | |

| | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| Charles, has long been a legend in our family | <i>page</i> | 12 |
| <i>Ms. Clare Howard</i> | | |

2. HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Life of Brother Charles Howard

| | | |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| ■ Family and childhood years | <i>page</i> | 18 |
| ■ Beginnings of Marist life | <i>page</i> | 20 |
| ■ Appointments and offices in Australia | <i>page</i> | 20 |
| ■ Ongoing formation and Provincial | <i>page</i> | 23 |
| ■ Chapter and General Councillor | <i>page</i> | 24 |
| ■ Superior General | <i>page</i> | 26 |
| ■ After his term as Superior General | <i>page</i> | 27 |

3. SUPERIOR GENERAL

| | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| Eight years with Br. Charles | <i>page</i> | 30 |
| <i>"The dreams of God for the Institute he made his own"</i> | | |
| <i>Br. Benito Arbués</i> | | |

| | | |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| "Charles Champagnat" | <i>page</i> | 34 |
| <i>Interview with Br Richard Dunleavy</i> | | |

4. THE HERITAGE OF Br. CHARLES HOWARD

Circulars:

| | | |
|--|------|----|
| – “Constitutions and Statutes. Our Rule of Life”. | | |
| – “The Founder challenges his Brothers”. | | |
| “The constitutions as a family portrait which shows us the best of ourselves”. | | |
| Br. Alain Delorme | page | 40 |
| – “Vocations”. | | |
| “Be for the youth of today signs of hope and love”. | | |
| Br. César Rojas | page | 44 |
| – “Discernment”. | | |
| – “Marist Apostolic Spirituality”. | | |
| “Mission is only mission when it is rooted in Christ and therefore in the will of the Father”. | | |
| Br. Peter Rodney | page | 48 |
| – “Sowers of hope”. | | |
| “Every day, our apostolate summons us more or less strongly to be men of audacity, full of hope”. | | |
| Br. Carlos Wielganczuk | page | 52 |
| – “An urgent appeal: Sollicitudo rei socialis”. | | |
| “This call comes to us as an authentic gift of the Holy Spirit ... And that is why I say that we should accept it without fear and without reservation, ... accept it even though it will involve struggle and a conversion of attitudes -as a call to a new life.” | | |
| Br. Mario Meuti | page | 56 |
| – “Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family”. | | |
| “We are called to help and complement one another”. | | |
| Br. Javier Espinosa | page | 62 |
| “It is a blessing and a joy to feel ourselves called to share our mutual riches and live together a fascinating spiritual and apostolic adventure”. | | |
| Ms. Ana Sarrate | page | 66 |
| The work of MIC and development in Africa: | | |
| “The footprints of Brother Charles Howard in Africa”. | | |
| Br. Eugène Kabanguka | page | 69 |
| The work and development of MAPAC: | | |
| “Foresight and courage to open international formation centres”. | | |
| Br. Manuel V. de Leon | page | 77 |

5. PHOTO ALBUM

| | | |
|---------------------------|------|----|
| Sayings of Charles Howard | page | 80 |
|---------------------------|------|----|



Director of Communications and the review FMS Message

To be both A TESTIMONY AND A TRIBUTE

The present issue of FMS Message is intended to be both a testimony and a tribute to Br Charles Howard, X Superior General, who died this year on 14 January.

It does not intend to repeat part of his history or of the rich inheritance he left us, but to reflect it today, recognizing in this way the valuable gift of his person and his contribution to the Institute and the Church, still relevant now.

We have given it the name "Audacity and hope," not only because this was the theme used by Br Charles for the XIX General Chapter, but also because it reflected his personality and the main courses of action he promoted.

For this reason, we have been especially interested in the testimonies of those persons who knew him more directly. And in rereading the circulars of Br Charles and the work he carried forward through brothers who lived with him, or who were involved with the development of some work or action relating to these documents. Some testimonies or contributions have had to be shortened to avoid repetition.

I apologize for this. But we have basically respected those elements which reflect our dear Br Charles.

The issue is divided logically into 5 parts:

1. Reflecting on Br Charles Howard. Reflections made by persons very close to him, such as Br Seán D. Sammon and his cousin, Clare Howard. Both texts were read at Br Charles' funeral on 24 January 2012 in Sydney.
2. A brief historical summary, taken from the booklet given to those present at the funeral.
3. Testimonies on Br Charles Howard as Superior General, from two Brothers who were part of his General Council.
4. Part of the inheritance of Br Charles Howard: His circulars, and the development of Marist work in Africa and Asia-Oceania.
5. Album of photos.

I would like to thank all who have contributed to helping this number of FMS Message succeed in presenting as "living and present" the one who was our Superior General from 1985 to 1993. Also to Br Terry Gilsenan of Sydney, Australia, who sent us so many scanned photos of Br Charles Howard.



To be CHAMPAGNAT today

Superior General

Some say, ironically, that the best way to cancel out someone's prophetic witness is to canonize him. Once he is on the altars, far from us, it makes it easier for us to say he was exceptional, a once-in-a-lifetime person. In the process we excuse our own mediocrity by over exalting those persons we are afraid to imitate.

This is not what we want to do with our dear Br Charles, whose memory we wish to last among us, because we recognize in him the authenticity of values we cannot afford to lose.

In December 2010, I had the opportunity to meet him and see that Charles continued to be the Charles of old, with his large personality and commanding ways! It is a joy to belong to an Institute that does not "mass produce" Brothers, but respects each one's way of being and, out of respect, accompanies our human and spiritual growth.

How will we remember him?

Charles was a man who demonstrated his affection in small details. When I was a young brother in Barcelona, Br Charles visited my province and, though I do



Br Emili Turú and Br Charles Howard. Randwick, 2010

not remember the details very well, we must have exchanged a few words in English. To my surprise, I received, a few weeks later, a copy of the Constitutions in English, with a personal dedication from Br Charles. I know that many other brothers would give similar testimony of such gestures, expressions of his sensitivity and attentiveness.

Charles, passionate in his quest for a more just and fraternal world. With sensitivity and tact, he knew how to transmit his sensibility to many people, opening new frontiers for our mission.

Charles, who sent a very powerful message to the whole Institute, in inviting a group of lay people to the XIX General Chapter. I remember with emotion the moment when this group entered the Chapter Hall, received

with loud applause by the standing capitulants. In a symbolic way, they were opening the doors not only of the Chapter Hall, but of the whole Institute.

Charles, who coined the expression "to be Champagnat today", and was truly so for all of us. Marist at heart, a true son of Champagnat.

As I write these lines, I imagine Charles looking at me with a somewhat mischievous smile, and telling me "it is not necessary to write anything about me!" freeing himself of any self-importance... And I am left with that marvelous smile, a reminder of a life lived in all naturalness and simplicity... and in the manner of Mary.

Thank you, Charles: your time with us has been a gift from God and a sign of Mary's tenderness.

1. REFLECTING ON BR.

TRIBUTE TO Br. CHARLES HOWARD





CHARLES HOWARD



WE ARE FAR RICHER BECAUSE OF

BR. SEÁN SAMMON

Taken from
"Eulogy for Brother
Charles Howard, FMS",
St. Joseph's College,
Sydney, Australia,
24th January 2012

WE ARE FAR RICHER BECAUSE
of your presence, wiser
because of your insights, more
aware of our responsibilities
because of the way in which
you have lived your life.

[...]

I want to share
something of the
man who while al-
ways our brother
and friend, was al-

so our leader as well as a source of inspiration and challenge, and
a model of what it means to be a Marcellin Champagnat for today.
He served so well in many roles: as headmaster and community
leader, student and teacher, Provincial, General Councilor, and Su-
perior General. He was also a builder and the Director of the Ju-

*General Council:
1985 – 1993*



YOUR PRESENCE

niorate as well as a writer and lecturer on topics as varied as religious life and its future, justice and peace, vocations, and the essential role of laymen and women in the Church.

Yes, Charles strode across the landscape of life with boldness, courage, daring; he had formidable talents and was gifted by God in so many ways. But in the end he was always Charles, a man of unusual faith, a person in whom you could confide, someone who listened well, was loyal to friends, enjoyed a drink and a conversation, understood human weakness, helped you to believe in yourself, and challenged us all to take some responsibility for the human community.

AN AGE OF TREMENDOUS CHANGE

Charles lived during a time in history that will be described years from now as an age of tremendous change not only in terms of scientific and technological advances but also in a deepening of faith and an understanding of the human person. He had passed sufficient years in the world prior to Vatican II to understand the need for radical change in our Church and lived long enough to be a midwife to the fundamental transformation called for by that historic gathering. For he was one of those rare men given a chance to help shape the age in which he lived. Never one to do things half-heartedly, he seized that opportunity without hesitation.

Elected Superior General at an age when many men are entertaining thoughts of retirement, he set out, with Benito and the members of his Council, on a journey that would bring about

many initiatives that today we take for granted. They were not won easily but came about through hard work, negotiation, and the building of consensus. However, like any true leader he did not search haphazardly for consensus but rather molded it to a vision. And in so doing, he made a genuine difference in the world in which he lived and left a legacy to our Institute that remains evident today. And, yet, throughout it all he remained always self-effacing. I remember well him telling me once that shortly after writing his last circular letter he received a message from one of the brothers in his Province. The text read as follows: "Dear Charles, I just read your last circular. Not bad. As a matter of fact, I might just go

During my second novitiate in 1988, Br Charles was often away on visits outside Rome. But towards the end of the session, we had the chance to have a few personal chats.

We had just spent time on the Christian animation of the adolescents of our schools and boarding school. I thought it would be good to give him the little book which described the experience of this camp. He accepted it as a little treasure and showed by that that little things had an important place in his heart of a Brother and certainly in his prayer. I was impressed that a Superior General should have this interest in a little event that took place in such a little country as Belgium. In fact, a few weeks later, he wrote to us how happy and impressed he had been to read the record of the camp. His great brotherly heart was truly attuned to listening to little things. In the image of Mary and of Champagnat, he was a Good Father for the Institute. Thank you, Brother Charles, and, alongside Mary and Marcellin, continue to watch over the Marist world.

BR ROBERTO DI TROIA - ARLON, BELGIUM

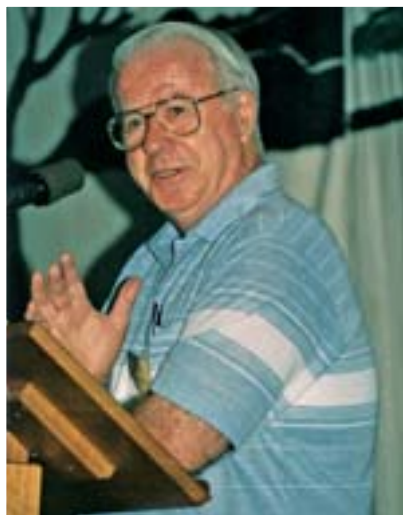
*With the novices
of Peru*



looking for some of the others that you have written and read them.” Charles was the first English speaking Superior General. Coming from a language group never well-known for its strict observance of the ascetical life, he by word and deed demonstrated what it meant to live a practical Christianity, not unlike that of Marcellin himself. In time he convinced all who would listen that faith in action was also an essential part of the message of that fiery prophet and Messiah who walked the roads of first century Israel preaching a passion for God and for humanity.

[...]

CHARLES WAS A NETWORKER



[...] Charles was a networker long before the term was coined or the practice became fashionable. In word and by deed he drew people together. Be it through a conversation, or by means of an article that he shared, or as the result of a bold move that he made, he got us to consider points of view other than our own and to look beyond the differences that might divide us and to consider so much more that we shared in common.

He traveled widely, had an uncanny ability to remember names, demonstrated his skill as a natural story teller, built centers of formation on the African continent and in the Asia/Pacific region that brought together all of our young brothers in those areas. He became the first Superior General to visit our brothers in the People’s Republic of China, giving hope to men who had suffered imprisonment, hardship, and

I met Br Charles in 1990, at the juniorate in Jaraguá do Sul - SC-BRASIL. He left me with the impression of a man of strength, determination, energy and enthusiasm for religious life as a MARIST. His knowledge and understanding of the wisdom of God enabled the Institute of the Marist Brothers to become open to new projects, with hearts without borders, with no barriers between Brothers and laypersons, including the area of missionary work.

LUCIANO MENEZES

deprivation for so many years.

He also renewed the Institute's missionary spirit, encouraging new foundations in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, and supported the recently established Hermanitas, a group of women who came together to form a religious congregation around the charism of Marcellin Champagnat. He made us so much more aware of our obligation to the poor and reminded us time and again that Marists were meant to be where the Church was not. He was among the first, too, to recognize the importance of lay partnership and did all he could to promote it.

A NEW AND MORE PROFOUND WAY

During these years he also came to know Marcellin Champagnat in a new and more profound way. Years later, he said that he began to see

founder as a human being with his faults and inner conflicts, griefs and failures, rather than a faultless paragon. "These insights helped greatly," he wrote, "to build a rapport between us; I felt now that he could understand and share in my own problems."

For Charles the founder was a "man of the heart", a person who loved passionately and deeply, a leader who was a friend, companion and father; someone who lived the sufferings and joys, the trials and dangers, the successes of his men. But couldn't the very same have been said about Charles himself? Absolutely, for during his mandate there was never for a moment any doubt that it was Marcellin Champagnat.



nat who was leading our Institute.

His love of Mary also deepened during this period; this fact was all the more evident when he brought the 1993 Chapter to a close by reciting a prayer that he had written to the mother of Jesus, the woman whom Marcellin so often referred to as our Good Mother and Ordinary Resource.

[...]

THREE TRAITS OF CHARLES

[...] With all that said, for me there will always be three traits of Charles that immediately come to mind: his passion, his love for our young brothers, his commitment to helping restore laymen and women to their rightful place in the Church.

First, his passion. Charles was passionate about so many things in life. He had a heart for the poor, was unbending when it came to issues of justice, believed deeply that those of us in religious life were meant to be the conscience of the Church. He challenged us to live this call in life in such a way that it was evident to all that it was well worth the gift of one's life.

*Lay people at
the XIX General Chapter*



He was also passionate about his God as well as his family, his friends, his brothers. He reached out to one and all. He loved us and understood our imperfection, was tolerant of our mistakes, helped us to face our fears.

Next, his love of our young brothers. Charles had a special place in his heart for our younger men. In fact, he was always at home with young people. They took to him, sensing somehow that he had cared deeply about them and had their best interests at heart. He never hesitated to provide the means necessary to help our young brothers to grow, to widen their perspective, to come to understand just how much Jesus Christ loved them. And he wrote to them regularly. I remember, for example, visiting a Province in Latin America during the years that I served as Superior General and meeting a young brother who told me proudly that he had received a note from the Superior General. I smiled but thought to myself that I could not remember having written to him. No worry; later that day as I passed his room I noticed that there above his desk was a note from Charles. For this young man, Charles Howard would always be his Superior General.

Finally, his determination to give laymen and women their rightful place in our Church. Charles was one of those thoughtful Churchmen who truly believed that it was the Holy Spirit who was behind the workings of Vatican II, and he never hesitated to make the work of that Spirit his own. Like John Paul II, he was convinced that this millennium was meant to be the age of the laity and he challenged his brothers to do all in their power to make that belief a reality.

For Charles though, an age of the laity did not mean the end of religious life. No, he saw it as ushering in a new era of collaboration and co-responsibility for mission. To his way of thinking as laywomen and men took their rightful place in the Church, those of us in religious life would also be better able to be who we were truly meant to be.

Having written about the Champagnat movement of the Marist Family and taken steps to

foster its growth within the Institute, he made the bold move of inviting a number of laity to our 1993 General Chapter. This had never been done before and Charles knew that their ability to attend sessions of that meeting was actually dependent upon a positive vote on the part of elected Chapter delegates. Perhaps following the old adage that it is easier to ask forgiveness than permission, he took the step of inviting them prior to any vote being taken and depended upon the good will of those assembled to do the right thing. And he was right. Chapter delegates quickly approved the presence of this first group of laity at the Chapter and the practice has continued ever since.

WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED

[...] We have been blessed by the years that you have been among us; we are far richer because of your presence, wiser because of your insights, more aware of our responsibilities because of the way in which you have lived your life. Continue to pray for us, as you always have, and never cease to be among us in new ways: challenging us to be the best that we can be: generous and loving men and women in love with God and on fire with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

And for those of us who are your brothers, assist us in making our own the dream of this simple country priest and Marist Father who is our founder: to do ordinary things exceptionally well and to love with an extraordinary love. Yes, continue to show us what it means to be Champagnats for today: men of faith, with hearts for the poor, ever eager to evangelize young people.

Charles, you number now among the Communion of Saints; you have earned your place with God, and though from time to time you may still have the impulse to write one of your famous notes to one or another of us, may you rest always in that same good God's everlasting peace.

Amen.



Ms. CLARE HOWARD

NIECE OF
BR. CHARLES HOWARD.

TAKEN FROM
"Eulogy for Brother
CHARLES HOWARD, FMS",
ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE,
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA,
24TH JANUARY 2012

CHARLES, A

CHARLES HOWARD, HAS LONG BEEN A LEGEND IN OUR FAMILY AND WE ARE PROUD TO CLAIM HIM AS OUR OWN. MY NAME IS CLARE HOWARD AND CHARLES IS MY UNCLE.

On behalf of his brothers, Jim & John, my siblings & their families, it is a privilege to share a little of Charles' early history &

some reflections on him as a family member, our Uncle Charlie, a person we love & admire.

Born in Melbourne in 1924, Charles McKean Howard was the first of three boys born to Mollie & Charlie. His middle name McKean is his mother's maiden name.

OUR FAMILY

Charles often spoke of his parents, readily acknowledging the role models they were for him. Their involvement in parish, school, St Vincent de Paul, their friendships and loyalty to people embedded values in him which lasted throughout his life.

Charles was educated by the Good Samaritan Sisters in Thornbury, Melbourne. We still have an original Grade 5 school report from 1934 where he earned 100% for every subject with the comment 'excellent student' written across it from Sr. Wenceslaus, perhaps a prelude to his later academic capacity and achievements.

There was only 18 months difference between Charles and Jim so they were a formidable pair in the things that kids get up to. They would share a bike, Jim sitting on the cross bar, Charles on the seat and each with a peddle. The other kids couldn't keep up with them! Jim recalls an instance where it was Charles who was in trouble and he was threatened with "You wait till your father gets home". Subsequently, Charles was nowhere to be found, though Jim remembers an unusual object appearing in the middle of the backyard... Charles hiding in a hessian bag.

Mollie or Nanna as we called her was an avid Fitzroy supporter and so Charles and Jim attended many matches at the local football

LEGEND IN THE family

ground with her. When older, they sold lollies at footy matches but apparently were easily distracted by game highlights which allowed other kids to pinch some of their stock. Consequently they never made a profit!

The family moved to Sydney in 1937 when John was just a baby. Charles was due to begin high school and his father, or Poppy as we called him, was advised that CBC Waverley was the place to go. He became aware however, that Marist College Randwick was closer so Poppy made enquiries on a Saturday morning during a working bee. He was introduced to the principal, Br Ignatius who was in overalls and pushing a wheelbarrow. Poppy, being a handyman, had a respect for manual labour so was impressed. Charles and Jim were enrolled at Marist Brothers Randwick and as they say, "the rest is history..."

I'm sure you'd be surprised to know that Charles engaged in a spot of boxing for a time. Both he and Jim were in the school's boxing squad with Charles showing enough talent to win through to the finals.

JUNIORATE

Charles was aged 14 when he went to the Marist Brothers Juniorate at Mittagong. In recent years he reflected on how hard that must have been for his parents, particularly his mother, and questioned the wisdom of boys leaving their families at such a young age.

His early life as a Marist meant that our family knew him intermittently & only glimpsed snippets of his life. The schools he taught in and positions of responsibility are well documented. But it was the person he was that impacted us:

Charles was a master at keeping in touch and communicating a unique message to whomever he wrote. For our family, postcards or small mementos sent to the nephews & neices, then to their children, of travel tales, birthday wishes or just 'thinking of you' were regularly received. My brother Phil recalls acquiring a significant key ring collection.
[...]

Charles Howard as Junior



CHARLES, A LEGEND IN THE FAMILY

Clare Howard

My sister, Maureen noted how the style of his cards to her always reflected the things she liked, and how he was able to communicate something unique to the person in all of his correspondence. Postcards and letters were received by many people.

[...]

His Christmas letters are famous, his correspondence would have measured in the thousands.

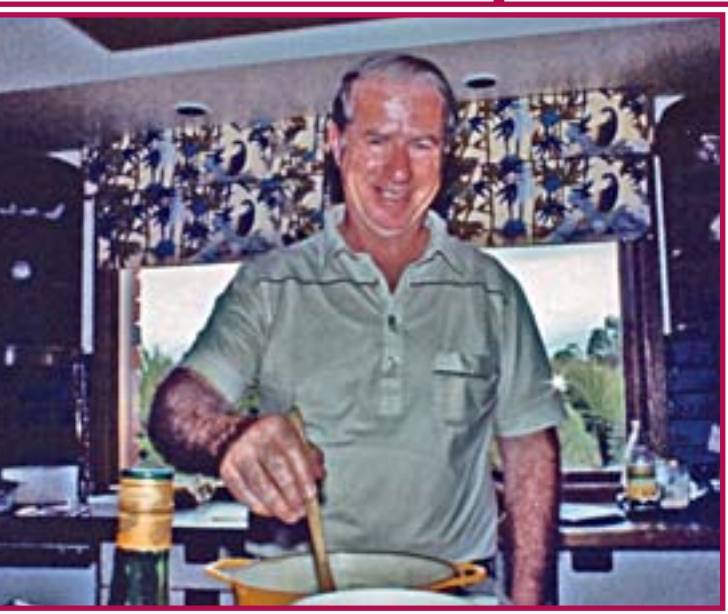
As a result of his positions of responsibility, he spent so much time away from Australia. Keeping connected was important to Charles. He valued friendship, perhaps because he lived so far from home and travelled so much. His family & friends in Australia were important to him. When home he was keen to connect whether it be sharing a meal, a walk, or a movie. Since his return to Australia, Charles appreciated that he and John were finally living in the same city, and able to spend regular time together, both of them having lived overseas for long periods.

It was wonderful to see him relax on Christmas days & family gatherings of the Geaney and Stackpool families. He laughed & enjoyed company around the table & watching the grandchildren of Maggie, Meg & Frank, and most recently, John's friends from Sierra Leone with little N'Nadie.

He's the only person I know who didn't like Maggie's caesar salad!

I know that at the Stackpool family gatherings he loved a big pile of dirty dishes, because of the communication opportunity it provided.

HE WAS AN INTERESTING AND STIMULATING PERSON



He was an interesting and stimulating person to have a conversation with. Politics, the state of the Church, experiences in Africa, the missions of the Brothers in various places around the world; films he'd seen, books he'd read. He made our world broad. His global experiences brought a great contribution to our family's awareness of social justice issues, particularly in the 1970's & 1980's when 'middle class conservative Catholics' were unaware of such issues and their relevancy to faith:

- Brothers murdered in various parts of Africa: Algeria, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo as a result of being Christian, or in solidarity with the people of the area;
- The Brothers in China who had been unable to be in contact with the Institute since the Cultural revolution, and had publicly lived without their Marist identity for many years,



*Charles Howard with
his niece Clare*

- These stories made us aware of what it means to lose or risk one's life for faith.

His stories brought to life issues of apartheid, structural inequality & oppression and political tyranny. And yet he could just as easily hone in to the ordinariness of life, or the challenges faced in daily living – relationships, finances, children, work. We all noted Charles capacity to ask, listen and really get to the heart of what was important to us.

Charles friendship with Br Kieran Geaney, or Col as we know him, is one which exemplifies all he values. Charles accompanied Col home from Rome after his stroke 27 years ago. Then when Charles returned to live in Australia, he regularly visited Col, taking him out for drives, and meals and in the last couple of years buying him a chocolate or ice cream knowing he had a sweet tooth. Seeing them together, it was obvious they had a special bond borne through the suffering Col has endured.

He was well read & intelligent: An avid reader of *The Tablet*, and many religious and spiritual journals, as well as local and international newspapers. So many of us received photocopies of articles of interest, with a brief note from him. Similarly, his generosity with books & articles encouraged people to think about the God aspect of our life.

He always had a word of affirmation recognizing unique qualities of the person whether it be the role of mother, teacher, father, businessman, student. He saw & reminded us of our potential - The gift of being affirmed & noticed: a rare experience in today's world. My sister Denise recalls the lasting impact his notes to her as 'special one' has had on her.

THE GOD PRESENCE IN THEIR LIVES

His theology was strongly incarnational... and he gently extolled to many the God presence in their lives...identifying aspects of ourselves that perhaps we didn't recognize or dare to link to the grace and blessing of God. He often quoted Zephaniah in my cards, "God delights in you, as I do" he would write.

He spoke simple & honestly even when having to say hard or difficult things. He had a unique capacity though to see beyond the weaknesses & failings of an individual or an institution. What he saw – and he could see through you at times to your core – [...] never overrode his loyalty and affection to the person or the institution. What an extraordinary gift that is to receive!

Charles had a particular appreciation for the role of women especially mothers: as a Marist, he was obviously influenced by the model of Mary, but he spoke often of his love & admiration of his own mother Mollie, as well as his exposure to the experiences of women in developing countries. Our sister Trish recalls he so often used the word 'lady'. His involvement in the organisation WATAC - Women and the Australian Church - on his return from Rome attests to his appreciation of the role of women in the church.

Charles' final year of ill health was a cruel & debilitating time for a person of great intellect.

[...]

He was a remarkable man: Strong yet gentle. Gracious & sensitive. A Man of principle.

[...]

The experience of knowing and loving Charles and being loved by him has changed me, stimulated me to be more than I could be without him in my life, as I'm sure it has for [...] many others [...]

Thank you Charles for the many blessings your life has brought to us and our world. You will always remain in our hearts.

TRIBUTE TO Br. CHARLES HOWARD



2. Historical summary



Life of BR. CHARLES HOWARD

FAMILY AND EARLY LIFE

CHARLES'S PARENTS WERE CHARLES (KNOWN AS CHARLIE) AND MARY (KNOWN AS MOLLIE). CHARLIE AND MOLLIE WERE BORN AND RAISED IN THE INNER SUBURBS OF MELBOURNE. CHARLIE INITIALLY WORKED AS A TIMBER WORKER AND A PLASTERER. HE LATER JOINED A CARPET CLEANING COMPANY AND ROSE TO MANAGERIAL LEVEL POSITIONS.

Mollie, until her marriage, worked as a machinist in a shoe factory. They had three children, all boys, Charles, James (Jim) and John.

Sydney, 1937



Charles was born on 29th October 1924 in the Royal Women's Hospital Melbourne. With his brother, Jim, Charles attended a parish school conducted by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, an Australian congregation. In the final year of his primary schooling his father was transferred to Sydney to be General Manager of his company. The family arrived in Sydney in August 1937, three months after the birth of John. The family rented a house in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney. There was a different system of education in Sydney. Charles and Jim had to attend a Brothers'



*Family 1940: parents Charlie and Mollie
with his brother Jim (left), John (center), and Charles (right)*

school which they had never done before; they had only been taught by nuns.

Two Catholic schools were recommended to Charlie for the boys: Christian Brothers' (Irish) Waverley and Marist Brothers' Randwick. On a weekend Charlie went to Marist Brothers' Randwick to inquire about enrolment. There were a group of men working around the school. He approached a man pushing a wheelbarrow and told him he was looking for the brother-in-charge. The wheelbarrow man was the Brother-in-charge!

That was enough for Charlie. This was the school for his boys. Teachers who were prepared to get their hands dirty were the right teachers for his boys! So Charles and Jim were enrolled for the final term of 1937.

When Charlie and Mollie were looking that year for a house to buy, one of the criteria was that it had to be near a Marist Brothers' school so the boys could be enrolled there. They eventually bought a house in Beverley Park so that the boys could attend the nearby Marist

Brothers' Kogarah. Charles, however, never went there since he had made the decision to join the Brothers, inspired by the witness of the Brothers and by a talk by Brother Andrew about the Brothers in the missions.

1937 was a difficult year for Charlie and Mollie, especially, for Mollie. She had to leave her family and friends and move to a strange city with a baby three months old. Now their thirteen year old son was asking to leave home and go away to the Brothers' juniorate at Mittagong – a place which neither he nor his parents had ever heard of. It took a great act of faith on their side.

Charlie and Mollie were active in church affairs over the years, supporting their parish and the boys' schools. Mollie was a catechist in public schools for many years. Charlie was active in the Knights of the Southern Cross and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. In retirement he was responsible for the widespread growth of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society stores and Welfare Centres. Our Brother Charles came from solid stock indeed.

EARLY IN LIFE MARIST: JUNIORATE/ POSTULANCY/NOVITIATE

About his schooling, Charles admitted that he always came first in the class. This was to continue at the Juniorate where he had excellent teachers, including Brs Oliver, Canice, Damian, Ethelred, Peter Carrick, and Frederic Eddy. He felt that kids who were not so good academically were more likely to be afflicted by serious homesickness. Charles recalled in later life that although he and others had short trousers in 4th Year at the Juniorate, the “spirituality” of their prayer forms could only be described as “adult Marist”, and often in Latin.



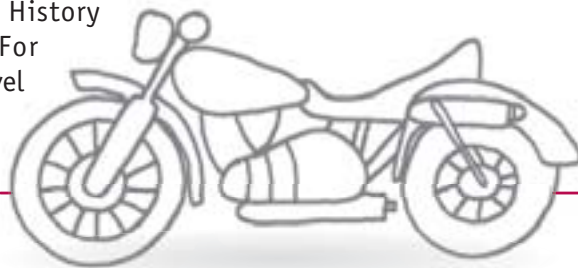
*Charles Howard
as novice*

When he received the Habit on 2 July 1942, he became – surprisingly – Brother Elias. Charles wrote later that his mother went to the Provincial and said “How do I tell the family that his name is Elias?” The response was “Oh, that’s a very good Biblical name”. She was not impressed.

In reflecting back to his days in the novitiate, Charles spoke appreciatively of the Brothers caring for their formation but added, “Though you can readily criticize some aspects of the spiritual development and whether it helped young people grow, they were pretty much standard in those days, including in seminaries. It was later on that we would become wiser!”

APPOINTMENTS IN AUSTRALIA

Charles was sent to Bondi Beach (July 1943), in a community referred to as the “Second Novitiate” since the Director was quite strict. From there, he moved to Glenelg in Adelaide as Senior Maths Master (1945-47). Here the students called him “The Boy” because he turned 21 that year. Then it was back to the Mittagong Juniorate (1948-50). While he was teaching at Kogarah (1951-54), the Provincial suggested it was time for him to start University studies at night. Although he was teaching Maths and Science, he could not study these part-time and so did an Arts degree, majoring in History and English Literature. For some years this meant travel by motor-bike!



I first met Br Elias as a 15 year old in 1951 at Marist Brothers High School, Kogarah, NSW, Australia. His younger Brother, John, was a classmate of mine and his Dear Dad, Charlie Howard was ever around the school fixing anything which needed to be fixed. Br Charles taught me Mathematics. In the following two years he taught me Mathematics and Physics. As schoolboy I could only but admire his energy. I have stayed in contact with Br Charles since my schooldays and saw him last, at St Gregory's, Campbelltown last July.

Br Charles quietly mastered all which was ever asked of him.

He was particularly affected by the tragedy of your Brothers in Rwanda and delighted with his meeting with your two elderly Brothers when he visited them in CH. He related to me, with great joy, a recent incident in which the Brothers were walking along the road and a police car stopped beside them. One asked the police, "Why are you arresting us today". The young policeman was surprised by the question and replied, "I only wish to offer you a lift, old men".

BOB WESTON, AUSTRALIA

he was to go to St Joseph's Hunters Hill as Headmaster and Community Superior on his return, a task which he was not initially elated about.

In the 1960s – both in society, university and later Church – a spirit of contestation was growing up, a cultural shift that meant a new imagining of systems in student and boarder formation. Secondary education in NSW was undergoing massive change, the State-aid issue was surfacing, and differing interpretations of the ongoing Vatican II were being proposed. These were the most

After two years at St Joseph's College (1955-56), he was appointed Director of the Juniorate from 1957-61. Men who were Juniors in those days remember him with great admiration and affection. The first visiting day a parent said to him:

"You're a bit young for this aren't you?"

He responded that this was probably true, but nonetheless he enjoyed those years and was a breath of fresh air: he engaged parents more, started a fund-raising group, conducted interviews with the juniors, abolished the "point scoring system", established a library, created a grotto, reinvigorated a monthly bulletin, and supervised all the essential activities which had characterized the Juniorate for half-a-century.

In January 1961 he sailed to France for his five month "Second Novitiate" at St-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, at an earlier age than usual because



Charles Howard
at St Joseph's College



*Charles Howard
at the 2nd Novitiate*

10-16 periods of teaching per week, Charles was able to lead with serenity, consultation, humour, astuteness, and compassion towards all stakeholders, and to make life-long friends in so doing. In accomplishing the needed expansion and upgrade of facilities, Charles showed himself a man of vision, a leader who could rally people behind him. After four years of planning, and construction completed, the College had accommodation and educational facilities unequalled in Australia.

His boldness was extraordinary. What was truly remarkable, however, was not the building but the advancement in thinking that Charles

complex problems the College of 1000 boarders had encountered since its foundation years. Charles understood that winds of change were blowing and that he had to steer the Brothers and College in uncharted waters. As one College review put it, "There was no blueprint" for what needed to happen and "the spectre of finance haunted the planner". In the midst of the myriad activities of College Headmaster, not excluding some

succeeded in achieving. New approaches to religious education in particular were gradually introduced. He initiated a number of spiritual and liturgical practices that were contemporary and engaging. Far from dividing the Brothers, he managed to enthuse them.

As one young Brother of the time noted, "Charles was the best Principal I ever knew: a superb educator and one of the very few people I have worked with who displayed lateral-thinking brilliance."

I entered the Marist Brothers in 1973 in Sydney. Br Charles, who had been elected Provincial the previous year, was a wonderful man who met me once, then amazed me by recalling my name several months later. He was a real inspiration to me, encapsulating all that I envisaged what it was to be Marist. His drive, his holiness, his warmth & his selflessness shaped a man who was not only a great brother but indeed a great Australian. When he was elected Superior General, I experienced such a sense of pride in his achievement, & realized that he was certainly the right man for the job. I extend my condolences to the brothers, his family and his countless friends and admirers at this sad time.

GREG TAYLOR, KEMPSEY, AUSTRALIA

ONGOING FORMATION AND PROVINCIAL

When he finished at St Joseph's he spent the first half of 1968 in the Lumen Vitae program in Louvain, Brussels, doing religious and catechetical studies. Immediately after attending the General Chapter in late 1968, he went to University College, Dublin, where he studied Clinical Psychology for 18 months. He finally had lots of reading time! These studies were to be invaluable in his future pastoral and formation roles. He enjoyed living with the Irish Brothers at Ballsbridge during this time.

Then he was in quick succession interim Headmaster of St Gregory's, Campbelltown, in the second half of 1970, Community Leader of Parramatta-Westmead as well as Coordinator of Formation in 1971, and full-time Coordinator of Formation living in the Wahroonga postulancy in the first

half of 1972. His interest in formation was not simply a consequence of his previous experience at the Juniorate but an intuition that the questioning around vocations and formation was not going to go away, that a paradigm shift was happening.

In August of 1972 Charles became Provincial. At that time there were 420 Brothers in the Province in 40 communities. He would never say "I want this", but rather "I think this would be a good idea". At his Chapter of installation, he canvassed the closing the Juniorate and making it a retreat centre. Another project was the opening of the Palm Island mission. He did all the visitations himself – he felt this was important for himself and for the Brothers themselves. He gave this pastoral work priority over events such as school openings. He found plane travel a great thing "because you had a few hours to read...

Charles Howard as Provincial and his Council, 1975





*Br Basilio Rueda
and Br Charles Howard,
XVIII General Chapter*

Time was very precious". In this period in Australia a number of Brothers were reconsidering their life vocation. Charles did all he could to help the men discern well and to leave in inner peace if that was their decision. One former Brother writes, "To leave the Order I required approval from the Vatican to be dispensed from my life-long vows. I made my case and the Provincial, who was now Br Charles Howard, ... sent it off to Rome. Some weeks later he rang me to say that my Dispensation had arrived. That afternoon in Br Charles' office in Drummoynes I turned over the document. On the back, in Latin, was a handwritten note from a Vatican official which invoiced the Order for the sum of twelve hundred pounds sterling in legal costs. Shocked, I expressed my regret to Br Charles that I had cost the Marist Brothers so much to leave. "Give me a look" he said. Then he roared with laughter. "That symbol in front of the 1,200 is not British pounds sterling. It's Italian lire. You've cost us only about one Australian dollar". I now actually felt a little deflated. 'Is that all I'm worth?', I thought!"

As he reviewed his time as Provincial in 1976, he was aware of having moved on numerous matters: he had helped Brothers to cope with changes in Religious Life, Church, Education, continuing Formation, Chapter Documents, and above all he had promoted their reading! There were other tasks which yet remained such as: new attitudes to Obedience, affectivity, the role of women, celibacy as a permanent commitment.

A measure of his contribution on a wider Church front is the comment of a Bishop of that time, "Charles was the most significant leader in the Australian Church at that time, bar none." For example, he had instigated the unification of the male and female Religious Conferences in Australia, and he remained great friends with many of these leaders in years to come. He helped many to understand and embrace the spirit of the Vatican Council.

CAPITULANT AND GENERAL COUNCILLOR

In 1967, Charles flew with Othmar Weldon, the Provincial, to Rome for the first General Chapter of the Institute after Vatican II. It was a time of ferment and promise. The Church had directed all Religious Institutes to take up the question of renewal, starting from the Gospels, a re-examination of their founding origins and charism and a



*Vatican Council II,
1962*

fresh discernment of the “signs of the times”. Unusually, the Chapter had to break and then re-convene in late 1968 owing to the need to give time to let proposals mature and to consult a wider group of Brothers. The question of the Institute and Priesthood was exhaustively discussed and almost resolved; it had been the most divisive issue of the Chapter. Looking back, Charles described this Chapter as “a passionate, complex, and very rich experience”.

His second General Chapter was that of 1976, which re-elected Br. Basilio for a second time, and elected Charles as a General Councillor. Br Richard Dunleavy recalls, “During this Chapter, Charles was the dominant influence responsible for a historically significant step in educating the 136 Marist leaders from around the world gathered there in Rome, to begin to “feel” – many rather uncomfortably – some of the key issues and implications arising from the call to Poverty and Justice. Until that time, Br Basilio had said that the topic was too sensitive to be dealt with in open forum in many cultures. The day of prayer and reflection Charles organized was a real turning-point for the Institute, and something that he, perhaps more than any other, was able to foster with growing fruitfulness for the Church and the Institute in the years which followed.” Hence emerged the “Poverty and Justice” document as well other rich documents of the 1976 Chapter: the “Prayer, Apostolate, Community”, the “Marist Brothers Today” and the draft of the new Constitutions (to be finalised in 1985).

As General Councillor, Charles travelled widely particularly in the English and French-speaking Marist world. These were times of great change in many African nations, in particular, and Charles spent a lot of time there. This was the

end of the colonial era. There was hope and promise but also a lot of civil disorder. Apartheid was still government policy in South Africa. Charles worked with the Brothers to build unity and a new sense of purpose in their communities and ministries.

The politics were different but no less tense in other parts of the Marist world. Charles was asked to establish a Secretariat of Social Justice within the General Administration. The idea was that there would be parallel bodies established in all Provinces to reflect on the social contexts of Marist ministries and to discern where transformation was needed. His brotherly manner in dealing with politically sensitive issues was critical in helping groups of Brothers to make significant changes in regard to entrenched attitudes and practices.

Energetic, non-conventional and surprising in his deeds and words, Charles Howard made a strong impact on people. He was a man blessed with a vision for the future. In 1992, during his visit to the Province of São Paulo, we visited the building site of the first part of the publishing house, Parque Gráfico da Editora FTD, in Guarulhos. It was a spacious building that would house the huge printing machines. Towards the end, I was rather nervous about his reaction to the magnitude of the undertaking. Suddenly, he turned to me saying “Mes compliments” (My compliments)! Charles’s unexpected response filled me with courage. He appreciated any undertaking that was worth doing.

**Br. DARIO BORTOLINI,
SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL**

SUPERIOR GENERAL

During the 1985 General Chapter, Charles was elected Superior General, succeeding Br Basilio Rueda.

This Chapter completed the new Constitutions of the Brothers. While this was a feat in an Institute with such evident growing diversity of nationalities and cultures, Charles felt that he lacked the benefit of a focused discernment of priorities by the Chapter for his time as Superior General.

So he set about working with his Council on priorities for their ministry. They determined five: getting the new Constitutions understood and accepted by the Brothers; discernment as the new faith approach to decision-making; mission, especially the courage to adapt or start new ministries in changing circumstances; formation: the preparation of the Formation Guide and insisting on serious experiences for those who would be involved in the formation of our younger men; vocations, active promotion as a key factor in Vocations at the world-wide level.

Other significant emphases for Charles: he spoke of our era as being the 'springtime' of the laity and promoted a greater openness to lay participation in Marist life and mission, inviting a number to the 1993 General Chapter; he launched the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family; he was instrumental in the establishment of the International Finance Board at Institute level; he sought to establish a new Marist presence in

Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union, eventually deciding on Hungary; he was very attached to the work of the Hermanitas, young women mainly in Central and South America who were at-tempting to develop a religious community based on the charism of Marcellin Champagnat. His one regret was not writing a circular on Mary. He was behind the choice of the slogan "Audacity and Hope" for the 1993 General Chapter.

A major undertaking for Charles was the establishment of an international scholasticate for the African region with the collaboration of the 19 or so authorities then responsible for the Marist Brothers in Africa. There was tension, but due to Charles' wisdom and relational skills, all was

*With Br Benito Arbués,
his successor
as Superior General.
Airport of Trichy, India.
1995*



eventually resolved with harmony. And now a magnificent complex housing some 100 Brothers in a network of fraternities has been established. Before he finished his term as Superior General, Charles had also launched a similar scholasticate in Manila, Philippines, for young Brothers in Asia.

He made himself available to the Church in Africa and in Rome. He participated in the 1990's Synod.

He was the first Superior General to make a visit to China in the late 1980s, causing overwhelming joy to the older Brothers who had suffered in former years.

AFTER BEING SUPERIOR GENERAL

Many things could be said about Charles' labours after his Generalate was over. He spent years in two novitiates, Kutama in Southern Africa and Lomeri in the Pacific. Finally he was able to fulfill a youthful dream of being a 'missionary'. He was the delegated Visitor for the Sector of India. He was a member of a group of eminent persons appointed to observe South Africa's first democratic elections.



When he returned to Australia from Rome, he first stayed at the Provincial house where there were secretarial services. He devoted time and energy to his much valued correspondence to a whole range of people. He once wrote with tongue in cheek, "Some people give books as gifts at Christmas time. A commendable custom. Others give book vouchers. Also commendable. 'El cheapo' goes one further. He suggests what books you should buy for yourself! Now that's real creativity."

In putting together a modest photo album of his time as Superior General, he chose words of Thomas Merton as the introduction,

"We are not rainmakers, but Christians.

In our dealings with God he is free and so are we.

It's simply a need for me to express my love by praying for my friends; it's like embracing them.

If you love another person, it's God's love being realized.

One and the same love is reaching your friend through you, and you through your friend."

Later he asked to move to Blacktown in western Sydney where he joined two other Brothers. He delighted in taking his turn at the cooking. He enjoyed living in a house on a suburban street where he could mix easily with people of different churches and faiths.

Charles kept on engaging with life. He linked with a number of Church-related groups: the

Aboriginal Ministry in the Archdiocese of Sydney and Diocese of Parramatta, Catalyst for Renewal, Australian Reforming Catholics and the Women and Australian Church movement.

In 2006 he moved to Campbelltown where the community has medical and other helpers. He remained extraordinarily kind and attentive to the end, even when he was quite confused.

TRIBUTE TO Br. CHARLES HOWARD



Day of Br Charles Howard's election as Superior General

A photograph of a group of men, mostly of Asian descent, in a room with large windows. Some men are standing and clapping, while others are seated. The atmosphere appears to be celebratory or appreciative. The windows show a dark night scene with some lights visible outside. A red banner with white text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

3. SUPERIOR GENERAL

“HE MADE THE DREAMS of God for



*Br Charles with
Br Benito Arbués*

THE rich personality of Br CHARLES BECAME, THROUGH his daily living, A NARRATIVE THEOLOGY OF THE MARIST CHARISM. IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO RECORD IT.

EIGHT YEARS WITH BROTHER CHARLES

THE INSTITUTE HIS OWN"

BR BENITO ARBUÉS

Up to 1985, Charles was virtually unknown to me and I think it was the same with him in respect to me. The General Chapter of 1985 brought us together in the work of the animation of the Institute and, above all, in a sincere friendship and in communion in the same spirit.

From that date, we were together for eight years. From his experience, I learned to live the internationality and diversity of the Marist Institute and to be attentive to the signs of the Spirit, because with his fine sensitivity he knew how to unite his dreams with the reality of everyday life.

His open, human, fraternal character, scrupulous in details, close to each person, inspired confidence and motivation. His friendship was not of the occasional kind. To this was added his fine anglophone sense of humour which made his communication agreeable and at opportune times resolved tensions or broke silences. He enjoyed joking about his forgetfulness, or about the surprise he felt when his Australian English was not understood by some persons of an English-speaking Marist Province. He also joked about curious things that happened on his journeys, such as the community which left a tube of shaving cream in his room, and when he entered he was surprised by this detail, since he had certainly forgotten his toothpaste... and without more ado, he opened the tube in question in order to clean his teeth.

Attention to details he devoted to everyone, as much in the General House as on the visits to the Provinces. He always surprised the parents of brothers on visit to Rome with some special attention, a gift perhaps. He showed himself attentive to each member of the council and kept an eye on the health, the state of mind or the fatigue of whomev-

er he was with. I remember that a lay person of my Province wrote him a personal letter about me. I knew the text because he gave me a copy. Of course, it was not a commendation. A few days later, Charles told me that he was tired and that we could both go out and have a pizza in a nearby restaurant. Not a word asking me for explanations, but certainly I received plenty of gestures of appreciation and trust during that meal.

Br Charles had time for everyone, including for the worker in the house complaining about the decisions of the director. He did not, of course, try to resolve

I had the good fortune of knowing Brother Charles personally. The first time in 1990, when as Superior General, he came to visit the Marist work in Aleppo; the second time, we invited him to animate the Formation sessions for our teachers of Lebanon and the fraternities of Aleppo. For me, Brother Charles is a Marist prophet. A simple man, attentive and tactful. He confirmed for me the importance of solidarity, openness to the laity, the role of women, the Marial face of our Institute. I expressed my gratitude to him several times and today I wish to associate myself with all the Marists to give thanks to God for the gift of his person.

By GEORGES SABE, ALEPPO, SYRIA

"HE MADE THE DREAMS OF GOD FOR THE INSTITUTE HIS OWN"

Br Benito Arbués

conflicts outside his field, but simply listened, helping the person to relieve his tension.

In the work of the council and the commissions, he showed himself serious and well organized on the matters he took in hand. At times, it was not easy to follow him, for his intuition and above all his tenacity were not content with just any response; with the courtesy that was habitual with him, he invited a restating of the solutions that were offered him. As Superior he was a good leader. His style harmonized animation, motivation and government. He did not avoid taking important decisions, some of normal government, others with an eye to the future, such as the creation of MIC in Nairobi for joint formation in Africa and that of MAPAC for Asia and the Pacific.

I value two aspects, in a particular way, in the person of Brother Charles as Superior.

WELCOMING THE LITTLE SIGNALS OF LIFE

It was easy to see his love and enthusiasm for the Marist charism and for the vocation of "brother". He showed concern for the vitality of the charism –he preferred the expression fidelity to the charism. In the group of superior generals of the Brothers' congregations, he promoted the joint publication of a simple document in 1991: "BROTHER in Lay Religious Institutes".

Brother Charles showed himself sensitive to the signs of the times and welcomed the smallest signals of life as something important; for what it implied but also involved. Even though in a time of renewal everything is important, for Charles, openness to the signs of the times and the calls



of the Spirit was a strong conviction he transmitted by his words and attitudes.

He did not hesitate to support the healthy concerns of brothers or of little groups from the provinces, especially on the subjects of formation, solidarity, commitment to the poor and evangelization of youth. He pushed for the opening up to and integration of the laity, sought means to make sure the voice of young brothers was heard in international Assemblies of the Brother Provincials or in the General Chapter, gave support to a group of young women who felt called to live, as women, the spiritual inheritance of Saint Marcellin. He took care of relations between the four Marist congregations and himself promoted informal and cordial encounters. Significant and tenacious was his concern for and openness to the countries of Eastern Europe after the “fall of the Berlin Wall”. He was also the one who relaunched and supported the study of the miraculous cure realized in Uruguay, the cure which led to the canonization of Father Champagnat in 1999.

PROMOTING DISCERNMENT AND LISTENING

Personal and community discernment was habitual with Brother Charles. He introduced it as style for work in the Council and above all in matters affecting dispensation from vows, appointments of Provincials and Brothers for the service of the Institute, formation centres and important financial decisions presented by the provinces. At the Council sessions he was an observer and when it was a matter of voting on important affairs, with a look he could sense if all the councilors were clear and in a state of mind to vote at this moment. More than once, he postponed decisions, but at the same time he came up with resources so that a decision could be reached with clarity and interior peace.

He also had some problems dealing with the Congregation for Consecrated Life. And despite the fact that the error originated in the Roman Dicasterium, Charles maintained his serenity and courteously turned to ask the opinion of the Council.



Brothers Charles Howard and Basilio Rueda have been a gift of the Lord for the Marists. Men of God, of prayer, of deep religious convictions. Mary was very present in their personal lives and in their writings. Both were born in October 1924. Basilio completed 18 years as Superior General at the age of 61 and Charles at 61 took up this service. It was clear to me that it was difficult for him to accept the communication that a little group of the capitulants made him to let him know that he was being considered and that there was a considerable likelihood that the Chapter would elect him as superior general. His conformity facilitated the chapter election. It was much easier for him to finish in Rome and retire to his Province of Sydney. From there he provided promptly the services he was asked for. In eight years as Superior he had built up fatigue and his health revealed from time to time a hearing problem that caused vertigo. He also paid tribute to malaria. There are those who make conjectures about how the transmission and information is passed from one superior general to another. Charles was methodical in these matters. Over time he prepared an account of matters that were not fully resolved. In a few files he left the situation very clear.

Brother Charles is one of the Brothers who has most marked and enriched my life. He radiated hope and perceived the future intuitively. He made the dreams of God for the Institute his own. He opened paths. He gave himself with love to the service of the Institute. His life and his message continue transmitting the future to us, his rich inheritance is a real reserve of hope for the Marist charism.

“CHARLES

INTERVIEW WITH BROTHER RICHARD DUNLEAVY, THE MANDATE OF BROTHER CHARLES HOWARD AS

**Q. WHAT WAS
BROTHER CHARLES'S
REACTION WHEN
HE WAS ELECTED
SUPERIOR GENERAL
.....**

A. I think Charles knew that he might be elected because so many Brothers of all nationalities within the General Chapter had been

encouraging him to accept in the lead up towards the actual election. However he himself felt reticent because of his age. He was then 60, and had already just served nine years as a General Councillor. But when he was elected so clearly on

the first ballot he humbly accepted the decision of his Brothers as the will of God for him. And, in fact.

In the ensuing years of his mandate his energy proved to be amazingly dynamic.



**Q. WHAT TRAITS
OF PERSONALITY
WERE EVIDENT
DURING
HIS TERM OF OFFICE
.....**

A. Charles was a man and a Brother of rare personal gifts and abilities. He was highly intelligent, and extremely quick in both mind and memory. He was equally a man of deep thought and of dynamic action. His leadership skills were truly phenomenal.

He had right from the start of his teaching ministry shown himself to be a leader who was not only skilled,

CHAMPAGNAT"

GENERAL COUNCILLOR DURING SUPERIOR GENERAL, 1985-1993



Br Richard Dunleavy, fms

creative, and decisive but also eminently educational and a model for those whom he was called to lead whether as teacher, school principal,, community leader, provincial and then as general councilor and Superior General. He knew how to "rally the troops around him".

I think there is no doubt that he would have shone in whatever way of life he might have chosen.

At the same time, as a person and Brother, he was simple and warm - a "people person" who could relate easily to people of all cultures and ages, with evident close interest and concern for all he met.

With his strong personal style he related easily to everyone, both young and old.

Furthermore his relationships and conversations were often spiced with some fine humour as well,

and he loved to relate some funny incidents from his past experience.

One of his added strengths in this area was his memory for personal names.

Archbishop Wilson, president of the Australian Bishops' Conference, and a former student of Brother Charles, referred to this gift at the beginning of the homily he gave at the Charles's Requiem Mass in St Joseph's chapel in Sydney.

He said that when Charles met you after some years he would ask not only about yourself but also your parents and each of your brothers and sisters – all by name!

Q. AND WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE WERE THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARLES'S SPIRITUALITY?

.....

A. Since Charles was a person of complete integrity, there was no discrepancy between his external behavior and his inner life.

He clearly lived – in union with Marcellin Champagnat - that iconic phrase in our Constitutions "to follow Christ as Mary did". They were his three models and sources of strength in both his prayer and his everyday action. They also became central to his writing of circulars when he became Superior General. During the General Chapter of 1985 and then immediately after his election as SG he stressed the need for the Brothers to make the spirituality and processes of discernment a central part of their daily life and institutional decision-making.

And I recall this as a regular way he carried out his governance together in the General Council meetings. Linked to that spiritual approach was his introduction of the nightly exercise of the "Review of the Day".

Another key focus for Charles was the need for Marcellin's followers to be involved in social justice, especially in their educational ministries. He himself was certainly one who believed in "living simply so that others may simply live" but he was also very concerned that the Brothers, especially in first-world places, and indeed the whole institutional Church from the Vatican down,

"CHARLES CHAMPAGNAT"

Interview with Br Richard Dunleavy



would make that a priority in their lives and institutions. This message merged more cogently, as with Pope John Paul II, in his challenging call to generous solidarity with those most in need.

Q. WHAT WERE CHARLES'S MAIN AREAS OF CONCERN AS SUPERIOR GENERAL

.....

A. As just indicated, right from the start of his mandate, he focused the attention of the General Council, - indeed the whole Institute - on the priorities of our Marist mission and social justice, and on the practice of discernment. But other priorities he developed with the Council in the first year were the engagement of the brothers in accepting fully the new Constitutions approved after the General Chapter, and the strengthening of Marist formation, both initial and ongoing, particularly in Africa and Asia.

The Institute Formation Guide was composed and published at that time. Other top priorities for him were to elucidate a clear understanding of Marist Apostolic Spirituality, and the sharing of our charism with lay people which led, first, to the establishment of the Champagnat Movement, and then to the encouragement to Brothers to share the Champagnat story and spirit more effectively with our co-workers and students. Thus he commissioned an updated translation of the biography of Marcellin at the time of the 200th anniversary of Marcellin's birth, and insisted that each brother received his own personal copy.

Another definite and challenging insistence for Charles was that he would personally visit as many Provinces and places as possible throughout the world.

His visit the, first to our Chinese brothers after decades of imprisonment and suffering, were a deeply moving historic occasion for them and for us all.

He went as a fellow pilgrim, a "brother among brothers" in order to encourage everyone, both Brothers and lay collaborators. He was indefatigable in this commitment which obviously took a huge toll on his physical resources. However we members of the Council who worried that he was so often weary before he left, were amazed when he would return home renewed and re-energised by the contacts he had made with Brothers, lay partners and students in whatever countries he had just visited. The visits uplifted him not only spiritually but also physically as well.



**Q. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE
YOU WOULD WISH TO ADD
ABOUT BROTHER CHARLES?**
.....

A. Perhaps two more comments.

First, he was a man not just for the Marist Brothers but also for the whole Church. Qualified as he was by his post-graduate studies in Ireland with the best theological, anthropological and spiritual insights from Vatican II, he was enthusiastic in helping to bring about the renewal of the Church as the "People of God".

In Australia, as Provincial, he had already been acknowledged as a Religious whose mind and action encompassed not just his own religious family but reached out to assist others in the tidal wave of renewal that followed Vatican II. When he came to Rome as Councillor it was the same thing.

He enthused the members of other General

Councils, and was, in fact, the main instigator of having the Congregations of Teaching Brothers prepare a historically important booklet on The Brother in the Church.

My second comment is almost an "instant photo shot" of all that I have mentioned above. An old Belgian missionary brother in the Congo, a Marist District which Charles sought to encourage and practically support in every way he could in the wake of the wars and poverty which afflicted that nation, on one occasion proclaimed him in a speech of thanks as **"Charles Champagnat"**!

For me that captured in one image the tremendous human Marist, brotherly, and ecclesial leadership qualities Charles lived and shared in everything he did over his many years of unique and generous service, especially in leadership, first in Australia, then throughout the whole Marist world as General Councillor and as Superior General.



4. The legacy of

TRIBUTE TO Br CHARLES HOWARD



Br Charles presents the Constitutions

CHARLES HOWARD



Circulars: Our New The Founder



OUR CONSTITUTIONS PRESENT WHAT HAS BEEN LIKENED TO A FAMILY PORTRAIT, SHOWING OUR BEST SELVES.

Now that we have the new edition of our Constitutions and Statutes, it seems interesting

to me to quickly revisit the first Circular of Brother Charles Howard, whom the Lord called to his reward on Saturday 14 January of this year.

This will be a way of rediscovering him, with his qualities as superior and his big heart placed at the service of his Brothers during a long full life, and also of thanking God, his family, his country for the magnificent gift which his rich personality, given fully to the Marist vocation, was for all of us.

It seems to me that the text of 25 December 1986: « Our New Constitutions », could well have appeared in 2012, and that its impact on

the minds of readers would not have been very different from that it had 25 years ago.

Before broaching the topic announced by the title of his Circular, Brother Charles, gives first of all a rapid survey of his first contacts, as Superior General, with the Brothers and their works in different countries: Zimbabwe, South Africa, Brasil, the United States, Nigeria, Ireland and Great Britain.

Then come the background and the genesis of this important event, which the approval of our Constitutions by the Church constitutes, with the reminder of the mandate given according to the decree « Per-

I had the grace of dealing closely with our Br Charles on various occasions. On all those occasions I experienced a great peace which he radiated, together with his fine sense of humour. He was a worthy successor of our unforgettable Br Basilio. The circulars of Br Charles were a source of illumination for me through his profoundly spiritual focus and enormous practicality, from what he wrote on Spiritual Discernment to his guidelines for the Marist Laity. He was very accurate in his directions about Marist Apostolic Spirituality, this new way of living our spirituality which has done us so much good. The great love of Br Charles for our Institute will have grown now he is in heaven. He will intercede for us so that we respond to the Lord by going in haste, like Mary, to new lands.

Br JOSÉ CONTRERAS LANDEROS
CIUDAD JUÁREZ, MEXICO

CONSTITUTIONS. CHALLENGES his brothers

BR ALAIN DELORME

fectae Caritatis » of 28 October 1965 on the renewal of the religious life. Brother Charles emphasizes that « *the Decree itself makes clear that the basic aim is not so much the writing of a text as a spiritual renewal and adaptation. The revision of the Constitutions is rather a consequence and a means for achieving this renewal and adaptation* ». (p.17) He then invokes the letter « Ecclesiae Sanctae » which simply repeats the emphasis of « Perfectae Caritatis » on « **fidelity to the Gospel, to the charism of the Founder, and to the times in which we live** ». (p.18)

He continues by insisting on our identity within the Church and the responsibilities which flow from this for us. He writes: « *Our Institute was founded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to exercise, by its life, witness and apostolic action, a vivifying influence in the Church and the world. It is a special gift to the Church and so the people of God, the Church, has the right to look at our foundation, to examine our documents to see whether they are faithful to the Gospel and the Church.* » (p.19)

Brother Charles then presents us with the notion of charism, by referring to the letter to Religious « Evangelica Testificatio » (1971) of Paul VI, and he dwells on a less known document, published in 1978, « Mutuae Relationes », which gives directives for the mutual relations between bishops and religious in the Church. « *Using the theology of this document, we can state that the charism of Marcellin Champagnat is an experience of the Holy Spirit and it is this experience which is the source of his spirituality and his apostolic zeal, and which gives a distinctive character to our religious community... This charism is transmitted*

to us Brothers to be lived, safeguarded, deepened, developed and shared. (MR 11) *The charism carries within it the power of attracting others to carry on this mission. It follows also that each of us, Brothers, sharing as we do in this gift, have a serious responsibility to the Institute and to the Church, to the whole People of God* ». (p.20)

For the work of understanding the charism more profoundly in the light of these texts, the Circular recalls the two main methods used for this purpose. First of all, research, reflection and meditation on the life of Marcellin and our first Brothers, and secondly reflection on our own experience as Marist Brothers and that of Brothers with whom we have lived, and on the action of the Holy Spirit in their lives. With reference to the effort achieved by the delegates to the 1985 General Chapter to finalize the text of the Constitutions, Brother Charles writes: « *It was, nevertheless, a work of love and respect carried out in a great spirit of fraternity and brotherhood, in a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect, in the spirit of Champagnat who himself struggled to give human shape to the inspiration of the Spirit which empowered him* ». (p.21) And he adds: « **It is a document that challenges us to a fresh beginning**, as we confidently reassert, not only the relevance of the Marist Religious in the Church and the world of today, but also the need that the Church and the world have for convinced Marist apostles. As Pope John Paul II reminded us in his personal address to the Capitulants: “Your mission to these young people is indispensable” ». (p.22) Thanking all the Brothers who participated in any way in the work of the Constitutions, Brother

Charles writes: « *What you have given us is a challenge and a call, a document which will help us deepen our love of the Lord, our consecration as Marists, our mission to the world, to young people, and to the poor.* » (Id.)

He then retraces in broad outline the history of the evolution of our text, from 9 January 1863, when Pius IX approved the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary, up to the decree of approbation by the Church of the current Constitutions, 7 October 1986. This historical review ends with an « *Alleluia! And thanks again to all those Brothers who made a contribution to this labour of love for the Institute* ». (p.25)

NEW LIFE

The pages following have as title: **“A call to conversion and new life”**. One reads: « *Champagnat’s Spirit-given charism calls us in a special way in our response to the Father. It is a personal call. Christ says to us : “Follow me”. This invitation is a call to conversion and it is manifested to us all in a special way through our new Constitutions... Conversion is a grace, because it is God who takes the initiative in calling us. When we receive this grace with humility and openness, there is a change of heart, a greater receptivity to the Lord’s call.* » (p. 26)

Brother Charles refers to Article 166: « Conscious of the gap that lies between the calls of God and our responses, we repeatedly feel the need to be converted anew... ». So also, Article 46, entitled “Our journey as consecrated men”, « *speaks beautifully of our journey in consecration, a journey which may be marked at times by doubt, loss*

of enthusiasm, and dryness of heart. It also speaks of the need to fight our way through all this, secure in the knowledge that we have sources of strength in Mary and our Brothers ». (p.27)

To conclude, he cites Article 34: “Preferential Love for the Poor” « *which combines the call of our own traditions with the contemporary call of the Church, indicated so clearly by Pope Paul VI and John Paul II.* » (p.27)

“Love for our Constitutions.”

On this topic, Brother Charles writes: « *Our Constitutions present what has been likened to a family portrait, showing our best selves, all that is best*



in us as a group – the values and ideals that we cherish, even though we are conscious that we do not always measure up to them. **They are the best expression we have of the lived experience of our Founder and of our Brothers.** They contain the accumulated wisdom of thousands of Marist Brothers, and we will be able to see in them much of our own experience and aspirations. » (p.28)

On the same page, he declares: « It is my fervent prayer that we will all come to have a great love for our Constitutions, and I invite you to join me in this prayer. »

Brother Charles continues: « **We can say that the Bible and the Constitutions form a unity for us, our two books of life and of love – life and love, both received and given...** This is no flight of fancy, Brothers. Take the Constitutions to your hearts as a symbol of your life, of your truest self, of your consecration, of your love given for others. May our Constitutions be for all of us a Sacred Book... The Sacred Book of our Constitutions represents for us, in a special way, the Good News of Jesus about the love of the Father – the Good News received by us as its words speak to us of God's love; the Good News given as we endeavour to share that understanding of God's love with others. » (pp 29, 30)

Thus ends the presentation of the Constitutions. The reader can then discover the methods for reading them, praying them and sharing them, personally and in community, with some practical advice for practicing Lectio Divina. After a rapid presentation of the new Code of Canon Law and our Proper Law, Brother Charles concludes with an anecdote which introduces the following paragraph:

«Persevering means much more than staying in the Brothers. Persevering means continuing to strive to be ever more faithful. It means believing, with Saint Paul, that our lives are linked with the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus. We all know deep down that our place is with Mary, at the foot of the Cross. Despite our stumbling and doubts, we know that our struggle to be faithful is purified in the Paschal Mystery. It is in this Mystery, too, that all our efforts, tainted though they be, are gathered unto God. »

WALKING WITH OUR CONSTITUTION

I believe, Brothers, that these new Constitutions can be a powerful factor in helping us to persevere more faithfully and more fruitfully. Let us thank God for them, and let us pray them, love them and live them. (p.40)

- The several phrases underlined in the summary proceeding from the first Circular of Brother Charles Howard seem to me significative of the vision he had of our charism at the service of the Church, of his love for Father Champagnat and the Brothers, those of yesterday and today, of his concern for the very poor for whom we were founded. The recall of Article 34 (Preferential love for the poor) on page 27 points in that direction.

And if it were necessary to keep only one quotation, I would willingly cite that on page 40, reproduced above, which seems to me to reveal all Brother Charles' love for our religious family and his burning desire to see it grow in fidelity to the Founder and the Church.

- The relevance of this Circular belongs also, I think, to the fact that the text of the Constitutions of 1986 has only suffered minor modifications to 3 articles out of 171. The Statutes have received numerous modifications (89), but this is normal, by reason of their very nature and the greater freedom the Church leaves to Institutes to do so.
- It seems interesting to me that Brother Charles Howard, in response to the unanimous desire expressed by the Brother Provincials during the General Conference of 1989, in Vêranopolis (Brasil), had composed the book entitled "Journeying with our Constitutions", published in 1991, with a view to facilitating the prayer and reflection of the Brothers based on the Constitutions. This book remains a useful instrument for personal and community prayer.



Circular: VOCATIONS

**“FOR OTHER YOUNG
people of today,
YOU ARE SIGNS
of HOPE AND LOVE.”**

¹ Cf. Circulars of the Superior Generals of the Institute of the Marist Brothers of the Schools, *Vocations*, Rome, 1 November 1987, Vol. XXIX, General House, 1987, 53.

ONE OF THE WRITINGS which strongly points OUT THE HISTORY OF OUR INSTITUTE AND IN WHICH THE SPIRIT OF BROTHER CHARLES HOWARD TRULY LIVES AND RADIATES IS HIS CIRCULAR ON VOCATIONS WRITTEN IN NOVEMBER OF 1987.

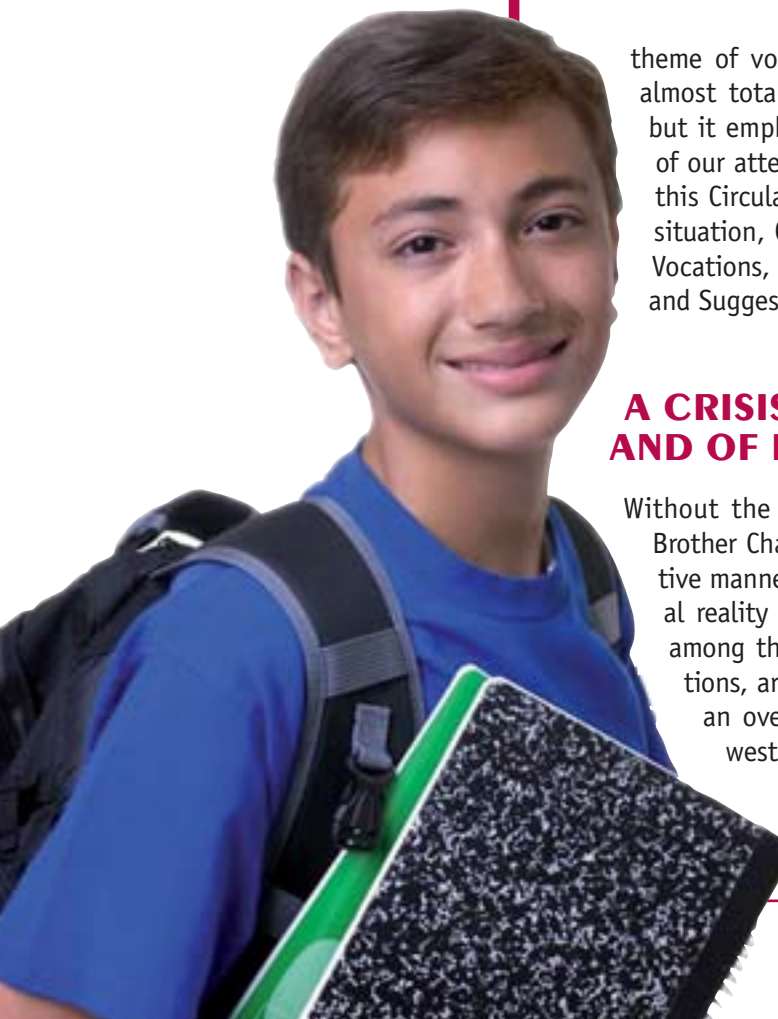
It was the second Circular he sent to us during his administration. The first one was dedicated to the theme of our new Constitutions. Since our origins the theme of vocations has always been present. Nevertheless, this was the first Circular totally dedicated to the

theme of vocations. The 18th General Chapter was dedicated almost totally to the definitive version of our Constitutions but it emphasized vocations as one of the priorities in need of our attention. From this arose the motivation to send out this Circular.¹ The Circular consists of five parts: The present situation, Changes in modern times, The theological basis of Vocations, Fidelity of the Founder, to his charisma, and spirit, and Suggestions for reflection and action.

A CRISIS OF CULTURE AND OF FAITH

Without the need for a compendium, throughout its pages Brother Charles approaches in a very simple, clear and objective manner the diverse aspects which make up the vocational reality of the times. In the first part, he mentions that among the factors that play a part in the decline of vocations, are, without a doubt, a crisis of culture and of faith, an overall profound change in society, especially in the western world.

Referring to the crisis of vocations during our history, he mentions that at no other time have



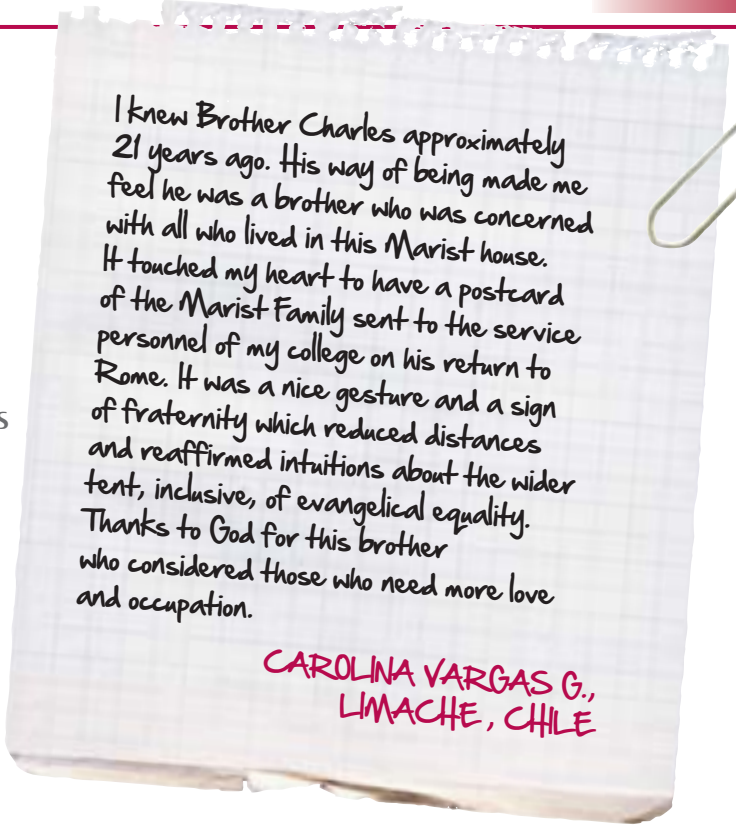
BR CÉSAR AUGUSTO ROJAS

we known a more general and prolonged drop. He mentions the crisis we had in 1822 that for three years seemed to threaten the development of our newly born Congregation. He also vividly recalls the years 1902-03 when the laws of France obligated all religious to choose either exile or a return to civilian life.

In the second part of the Circular he analyzes the changes in society and in social attitudes, mentioning more obvious tendencies like secularism, the decline of the sacred and religious-based values, the domination of economic exploitation, the power of new technology, the struggle for autonomy, new attitudes towards the role of women in society and the Church, different approaches to freedom, authority and obedience, changing attitudes about affectivity, intimacy and sexuality, a declining birthrate and general cultural instability. With respect to changes in the Church, he speaks of a Church that is open to dialog with the world and with other religions, a Church that serves, that has a new appreciation of the laity, that is serious about renewing itself, and that questions itself with all the confusion and controversy which comes as a result.

PERMANENT COMMITMENT

In regard to Religious Life, he singles out its confusion and loss of identity due to so many cultural and ecclesial changes. He mentions the debilitating loss of confidence, both in those



I knew Brother Charles approximately 21 years ago. His way of being made me feel he was a brother who was concerned with all who lived in this Marist house. It touched my heart to have a postcard of the Marist Family sent to the service personnel of my college on his return to Rome. It was a nice gesture and a sign of fraternity which reduced distances and reaffirmed intuitions about the wider tent, inclusive, of evangelical equality. Thanks to God for this brother who considered those who need more love and occupation.

CAROLINA VARGAS G.,
LIMACHE, CHILE

whose responsibility it is to invite, and in those who are called, who draw back from making permanent commitment amid the continuing flux of change. He also refers to the importance of the role of laity in the Church and the importance of working together with them.

In the third part Brother Charles give us a reflection on vocations. He stresses that it is God's initiative, His gift and His work. "The basic Christian call is Jesus', 'Follow Me!' in which He invites me to choose Him as Lord and Savior, to be His disciple and His fellow-worker, to be of His Church". The invitation to follow a specific calling, as a Priest, as a Religious, as a Lay Person, does not coerce us. He underlines repeatedly the importance of the lay vocation in the Church. He presents various elements which are important in relation to this "Call", such as mediation [to mediate the call of God to another], prayer, faith, and mission.

The fourth part is one of the most beautiful and interesting because he brings up the theme from the life of our founder. He regards Marcellin as someone who has much to tell us about vocations. He refers to his belief in our vocation and his appreciation of this gift, expressing how



*Picnic with
Br Basilio Rueda
and other Brothers
in Brasil*

much he valued the vocation of the Brother, and his prayer for vocations, having frequent recourse to Mary with this purpose. He speaks of his unbreakable confidence in Jesus and Mary and, finally, his action in times of crisis, recalling that, in difficult moments, he invariably implored the help of the Most High in his prayers, and he undertook all his efforts that experience, consultation and reflection most clearly suggested to him.

Finally he offers us a series of reflections and modes of action, such as the responsibility for each Brother for fostering vocations, a Province vocation plan of action that includes many programs, ways and means of reaching out and welcoming young men, and considers having a Province Vocation Team.

He exhorts us make efforts to personally meet young men, he encourages us to be enthusiastic about our style of life and to have greater confidence in vocation promotion, being more willing when it come to encouraging young men to reflect on the call that they may have received, and to be able to present the call of the Lord to priestly and the religious life as an invitation that could possibly be addressed to them.

He refers to an experience of Marist community as another favorable field for growth in vocations, pointing out important characteristics that need be there: it must be vibrant, prayerful, inviting, with a sense of mission, and with characteristics of simplicity, openness and welcoming that are proper of a Marist community. He points out the importance of accompaniment and the value of the groups.

He reminds us of the role of the family, referring to the important influence parents have in awakening vocations, and also about the influ-

² Circulars of the Superior Generals of the Institute of the Marist Brothers of the Schools, *Vocations*, 98.

ence that they also may have to dissuade their children from listening to the call to religious life. He insists that these parents need our help in order for them to adopt a positive attitude about their child's future and he suggests looking for occasions for parents and children to become acquainted with and get to know religious and priests who live their consecrated life with enthusiasm.

He concludes the Circular by addressing our younger Brothers encouraging them to be actively committed to the apostolate of vocations: "I urge you to take an active role in this commitment with audacity and courage, with sensitivity and in a spirit of prayer. I remind you that, for other young people of today, you are signs of hope and love. May your experience of God help you touch their hearts."²

So, we see that this Circular speaks of much of today's reality and efforts given to this widespread theme about the vocation to Marist consecrated life. With the passing of years, all of these initiatives presented by Brother Charles, have become realities and have been, for the most part, implemented by our administrative units.

We are aware that the vocation to the consecrated life is a gift from God which looks for a generous response from a human being; God continues calling and granting to many men and women the grace of choosing this choice of life. Many times the reality of today's society halts the flourishing and strengthening of such vocations. We must take on and confront with daring and creativity this challenge to the religious life.

Inspired by our founder and aware that this is not the first time that our Institute has seen itself confronted in this way, we are confident of the protection of God and our Good Mother. By means of continual prayers and searching for the best means possible, we are confident that God and our Good Mother will protect us as we work through this difficult challenge of promoting vocations to the consecrated Marist life.

A very interesting element that comes to light in the writings of Brother Charles is the strong role of the lay vocation. Today they can be supporters and advocates for our choice and style of living as

religious Brothers. We are called to love and value our respective vocations, nourishing it in a new relationship of Brothers and laity, and working together to sustain and take care of each other in our diverse and varied Marist mission locations.

THE VOCATIONS

Inspired by this circular on vocations, we see one of the main challenges to our Marist Life today is to generate a vocation culture which penetrates and permeates all of our surroundings, that at a personal level makes us strong proponents of our history for today, that our communities reflect the life and joy of our consecrated life, that our missions be places where the values that are cultivated continue to spread in a favorable environment for the awakening, accompanying and strengthening of vocations to the Church and in a special way to the consecrated life and to the lay Marist life.

With his Circular, Brother Charles sent a loud cry to our Institute of his time which continues ringing in our hearts today. Beloved members of the Marist Family, let us feel that we are all responsible for the continuing today and throughout history of this charism which is so meaningful for our Church and our world today. But also, may we be ever aware that it is a charism that must continue living in all men and women who feel this special call of God to live the values that Marcellin Champagnat and our first Brothers embodied and which were transmitted through diverse generations.

May the God of life and our Good Mother continue listening and receiving our prayers for the increase of vocations to our Institute and may our administrative units, be they at a regional, provincial or local level, go on seeking the best means and structures so that our vocation work is formed in as a real choice in which all of us feel part of.

We ask Our Lord through the mediation of Brother Charles to continue accompanying and blessing us in this beautiful but complicated and challenging mission.

CIRCULARS: DISCERNMENT. MARIST Apostolic

“Mission
is only mission
when it is rooted
in Christ and
therefore
in the will
of the Father”

THE REQUEST TO WRITE ON TWO OF BROTHER CHARLES HOWARD'S CIRCULARS PROMPTED ME TO TAKE THEM DOWN FROM THE SHELF AND RE-READ THEM. IT PROVED WELL WORTH DOING, AND I WOULD HIGHLY RECOMMEND IT.

Despite the passing of the years since they were written, they contain much that encourages and challenges Marist life and mission in the 21st Century.

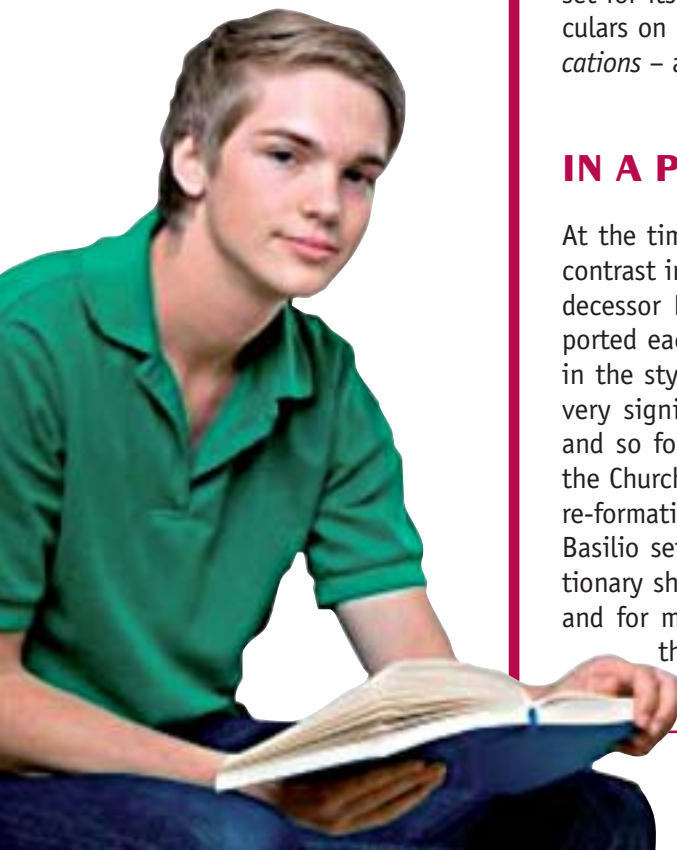
All in all, Charles wrote eight circulars. That on *Discernment* was his 3rd – written

in 1988. The circular *Marist Apostolic Spirituality* was his 8th and final circular, coming in two parts in 1992 and 1993.

Let me begin with the circular on *Discernment*. In its Introduction, Charles outlined the five key priorities which the new General Council set for itself following its election in 1985. Charles was to write circulars on all five priorities, with two – the *New Constitutions* and *Vocations* – already written before turning his attention to *Discernment*.

IN A PROCESS OF RE-EDUCATION

At the time, one thing that the Brothers commented upon was the contrast in style between the writing of Charles, and that of his predecessor Br. Basilio Rueda. The two styles complemented and supported each other. That of Basilio was more pedagogic – something in the style of a textbook. He was setting out to communicate the very significant changes in theology, ecclesiology, Religious Life, and so forth that had emerged from Vatican II. The Brothers (and the Church) needed to be engaged in a process of re-education, and re-formation of their understanding and practice of Religious Life. Basilio set out to write a solid point of reference for these revolutionary shifts in paradigms. With that so expertly done (both for us and for many others in Religious Life) his successor Charles could then adopt a more pastoral style in his writings.



Spirituality

BR PETER RODNEY



The circulars of Charles were more like lengthy letters. His focus was on the living out in daily life of the new orientations of Religious Life. So, the circulars of Charles were briefer in length and made frequent reference to Brothers (generally unnamed) he had met during the course of his Religious Life and years as Superior-General. These little 'vignettes' from real life gave substance and humanity to the points that he was making. In a real sense they were family stories he was passing on - stories of success and weakness - actions both heroic and self-centred. And

the Brothers could resonate with these stories. This style reflected the personality of Charles. Gathered around the community meal table he loved to tell stories, and readily encouraged others to tell their stories – especially when there were visitors. There was also something 'tender' about his writings. While he could be very passionate and challenging in a 'manly' way, he did not lose sight of the 'womanly' thoughtfulness, sensitivity and compassion that is also our charism. In *Discernment* he developed at length the practice of a 'discerning heart' – which he saw as to be practised daily, and as the essential foundation for those occasional, life-orienting, discernment decisions.

TO TEACH THE CONSTITUTIONS

At the distance of more than 20 years, it is also striking how much Charles used the 'new' Constitutions in his circulars. I think he took it as his personal responsibility to promote and teach the Constitutions promulgated by the Chapter that elected him Superior-General. His first circular (1986) was on the Constitutions and his Council was to produce in 1991 an extensive resource: *Living Our Constitutions*. He frequently referred to the Constitutions as the richest expression today of all that our charism had become since the time of Marcellin and the First Brothers. There is hardly a page of the circulars which lack at least one quotation from the Constitutions. In many instances he would bring a number of different Constitutions together to produce a very telling description of what he wanted to communicate.

A third element that is striking today is how contemporary the challenges remain. Charles retained a number of concerns for his beloved Institute, and at the same time had discerned a vision for its renewal. His writing was clear and challenging and always encouraging and hopeful. He addressed his writing to all levels of the Institute – to Provinces and their leaders, to communities and their life together, and to individual Brothers and the choices they were making every day in living their Marist Religious Life. In the *Discernment* circular he went to some length to develop the value and methods of both personal and communal discernment. In the passionate way that characterised the man and his living of life, he did not step back from critiquing our commitment to the marginalised – especially in asking who are the principal participants and beneficiaries in our schools and educational ministries. In three different places in *Marist Apostolic Spirituality* is the challenge: “mission is only mission when it is rooted in Christ and therefore in the will of the Father.” At the same time, he could see that in the post-Vatican Church the Laity would take their rightful place, and they would enrich the living of Marcellin’s spirituality and mission. Now, twenty years later, this is starting to flower among us.

Naturally, Charles reflected his own culture, while at the same time being very conscious of the need for the Institute to be – in fact as well as in name – inculturated. From his own culture he brought the value of practicality. (Marcellin had this quality also.) So, we see in his circulars that Charles went to great pains to communicate ways and means by which his ideas could be lived out in daily life; saying – this is what we need to do, and this is how we can do it. Little wonder then that the circular on *Discernment* contained a little inserted pamphlet. The Review of the Day was presented in easy steps, laid out with practical questions, offered as a means of growth rather than a burden to be taken on. It was not the Examination of Conscience, with its focus on sin and failure, with which many Brothers were familiar, but a more positive focus on the action of a loving God in each day. Thus reflecting the very incarnational and apostolic spirituality which Charles himself had.

THE MARIST APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY

All of this was to come to full flowering in *Marist Apostolic Spirituality* – his final circular. Again and again he returns to the themes of his passion and vision, developed in previous circulars – the richness of the Constitutions, the treasure of our Vocation, discernment practised in daily life, Mary and Marcellin as models of what he was encouraging in the Institute, love for the poor, his vision for the Marist Lay Vocation, etc. Themes returned to, and refreshed with insight and hope.





Being probably the first official Institute document to present Marist Apostolic Spirituality in any detail, Charles seemed careful to ground it in our charism and living patrimony. There is frequent reference to Mary, Marcellin and the First Brothers. It was in this circular that Charles spoke of Mary *with dust on her feet* - an image very dear in the spirituality of many Marists today. No discussion of Marist Apostolic Spirituality could be complete without reference to Marcellin's practice of the Presence of God, and so Charles set out to develop how that might be understood and practised today.

Striking in *Marist Apostolic Spirituality* is his emphasis on the Church as communion - promoting the ecclesiology of Vatican II. A careful reading of his ecclesiology will bring to notice its Marian element - the Marian face of the Church - which is now becoming the focus in our time.

As I said previously, there is much that remains very contemporary in Charles' circulars. Maybe we have moved on from the former 'battles' about forms of community prayer. But for me, his challenges about the discernment of our apostolic priorities remain with us. Today we speak of "new lands". Like people of our day, Charles expressed a concern for the protection of our environment and its care. He spoke of working in ministry with all people of good will; speaking of this often and citing examples specifically of ministry in Moslem countries. Twenty years ago he was foreshadowing the challenge in our day towards effective inter-religious dialogue and shared ministry.

Marist Apostolic Spirituality was his final circular, and I have the sense, given that it was published a year before the end of his term, that Charles knew this. There is the sense that he used his final opportunity to present a wide-ranging and passionate commitment to a number of themes dear to his heart. I have spoken of some of them. He gave particular emphasis to three of them in the conclusion of the circular. He introduced them by saying that the Institute had need of *men of vision with regard to our charism*. In fact, was he not describing himself? The three examples he presented were: The Marist Family and the Champagnat Movement - what is now developing as the Lay Marist Vocation; Solidarity - with a focus on solidarity *ad intra*: Marists with a global vision and an international concern for the vitality of our charism; and finally Inculturation - which he expressed as cross-cultural enrichment of both the Institute and the Church. Does all this sound very much of the 21st Century?

Finally, if you were seeking a succinct summary of the personal spirituality of Charles and all that he presented in *Discernment* and *Marist Apostolic Spirituality*, you need look no further than the prayer with which he concluded his *Letter of Thanks* - written in 1993 at the conclusion of his fruitful years of Institute leadership. It is fitting that the faith, and hope, and love, and passion of Br. Charles Howard remain with us in his prayer which forms the basis of #156 of *Water from the Rock*.

Circular: SOWERS of HOPE

“Each day
OUR APOSTOLATE
SUMMONS US
IN LESSER AND
GREATER WAYS
TO BE MEN
of HOPEFUL
COURAGE”

THE CIRCULAR SOWERS of
HOPE, WRITTEN by BR
CHARLES HOWARD 22 YEARS
AGO, CAN CROSS THE GENER-
ATIONS WITH ITS CONTENT AL-
WAYS RELEVANT.

ing is lost for God. Let us read attentively the three parables in
Luke : the lost sheep (15: 3-7), the lost coin (15: 8-10) and the two sons (15: 11-32).

“It is the presence of the Spirit in our lives, in
the world around us, in the people who
make up that world, it is his pres-
ence that fills us with hope.

It is this presence in the
life of each person which
enables him to play a
role in building the
Kingdom whatever his
race or religion, whatever
his political views.”

“And because of the life
of Christ within us, he
acts through us and
loves others through us in
ways we can never dream
of, as St Paul reminds us:

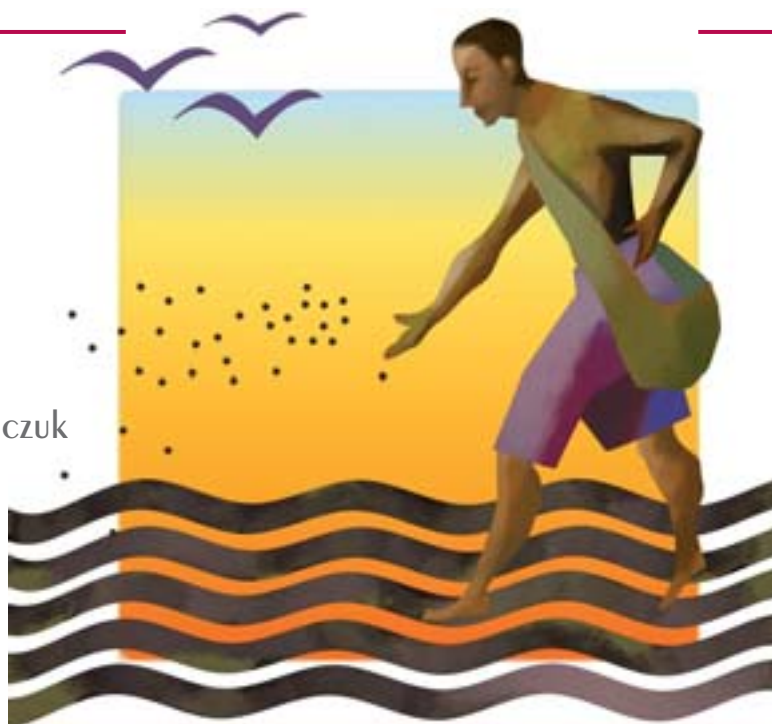
*To him who by means of
his power working in us is able to do so much more than
we can ever ask for, or even think of; to God be the glory
in the Church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever
and ever. Amen.” (Eph 3: 20)*

Christ goes before us and accompanies us with
his Spirit, he renders our works fruitful. The



BR CARLOS WIELGANCZUK

work we do is not our own, but God's, was a frequent refrain of our dear Founder. Hope, a gift of God, has to be cultivated all life long, especially through prayer and contact with the Word of God. It will sustain us in the difficult times we are going through.



VICTORIOUS IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULTIES

Docility and fidelity to God in our life mean that we will emerge victorious in the midst of sufferings, difficulties, and complications.

At such moments, we will know where to place our hope. Saint Paul writes: "Everyone doing the building must work carefully. For the foundation, nobody can lay any other than the one which has already been laid, that is Jesus Christ. On this foundation you can build in gold, silver and jewels, or in wood, grass and straw, but whatever the material, the work of each builder is going to be clearly revealed... If his structure stands up to it, he will get his wages." (1 Cor 3:10-14) The wonders worked by God, in whom we place our hope, read in one's personal history and in events, broaden our horizons, expand our hearts with hymns of praise and gratitude. They give rise to a life commitment revealed in the joyful service of others, in which the action of God is perceptible.

The way in which Br Charles approaches the Circular aims to promote apostolic initiatives. He throws light on and orientates his discourse where the action of God becomes most concrete,

as much in personal experience, easily perceived, as in the history of persons, in the Church, in the events and in the progress of the Institute during the 195 years of its existence. What wonders the Lord has done and what great hope has been born in children and young people during those years through the mediation of brothers and lay people, thanks to Champagnat's docility and fidelity to God!

History teaches us that any event cannot be excluded from the fidelity and action of God, even if this is not clear at first. A reading made in the climate of prayer will help uncover the traces of God in these events and confirm what Schillebeeckx affirmed in one of his books: "Everything is grace visible".

The lights that arise along the road of the person who lets himself be seduced by authentic Hope are so numerous that the certainty is born that the Holy Spirit is acting among us, in the Church, in religious life, and in our Institute in particular. The certitude that Jesus is engaged with us and with humanity, and that he goes before us, accompanies us and inspires our words, our gestures and our attitudes, gives us dynamism and makes our actions fruitful.

SERENITY

Br Charles, in the Circular, invests Hope with some characteristics which help us have greater clarity in what we are living:

Serenity is one of the chief characteristics of hope. That supposes that we are convinced of Christ's presence and his final victory, despite all the obstacles we may encounter. That also supposes being convinced of the presence of the Holy Spirit who confers peace, serenity and joy, the privilege of persons really filled with hope.

The living experience of serenity, peace and joy teaches us that God remains faithful in our lives, which encourages in us courage and audacity.

Marcellin, man of initiatives, strove with audacity, daring and courage for the legal approbation of the Institute during his life. He nourished the certainty that God and the Virgin Mary, in whom he placed all his confidence, would provide for this need which would turn to the good of children and young people. Which is what happened in 1851, eleven years after his death, with unexpected advantages.



We know our Founder by another significant feature of his personality : lacking resources, he began construction of the Hermitage and accomplished the work by his audacity, born of unfailing confidence in the fidelity of God and in the protection of Mary, which never let him down. The person who relies on the fidelity of God becomes creative, has so much more energy in the service of the brothers, sees his own needs as less important than the authentic needs of others. He finds that the Holy Spirit does not leave him inactive, not only in what concerns action, but especially with regard to life which brims over, stirring up new and courageous initiatives. Examples of audacity, creativity, confidence, and courage we have in our Institute, in the person of our Founder, in our first Brothers and in so many Brothers who have given their lives in response to God's fidelity. The Holy Spirit acts vigorously in persons, events, in society, in all sectors, raising an unbelievable dynamism, which would be impossible by human force alone.



CHRISTIAN HOPE

Christian hope is a courageous hope, for it is based on the fidelity of God in his love for us from always and for always, and on the following of Jesus, to whom we are committed by the religious vows.

Referring to courage, Br Charles writes: "For most of us courage will not be a dramatic virtue, but rather the courage of everyday fidelity, fidelity in living the Gospel and spreading the Gospel ... Each day our apostolate summons us in lesser and greater ways to be men of hopeful courage." What has been written on the living of Hope does not lead anyone to think that life will be easy and without problems for all that. One who truly relies on the fidelity of God and on seeking his will, will find the cross on his route, and with it the Paschal Mystery. But he will surmount all obstacles thanks to Him who goes before us and accompanies us with his grace and the always efficacious presence of his Spirit.

Do we want support and encouragement on our earthly pilgrimage? Let us turn our eyes towards Mary, our good Mother, model of hope, she who has done everything in the Institute and who continues to do so. As at the wedding at Cana, she tells us: "Do whatever he tells you." (Jn 2: 5) We are aware that if we were not sustained by the never failing fidelity of God in our lives, we would be dramatically vulnerable and unproductive for the Kingdom of God. We are strongly invited to become aware of the riches that the Lord has granted us as members of the Institute in the course of the 195 years of existence. Deeply inspired by the signal grace of walking in the steps of Christ, in the service of children and youth, protected by Mary, our good Mother, and Saint Joseph, our patron, and sure of the intercession of our Founder, we place all our Hope in the loving will of the Father, whose fidelity has never failed us.

CIRCULAR: AN URGENT APPEAL - sollicitudo

“THIS CALL COMES
TO US AS AN
AUTHENTIC GIFT OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT...
AND THAT IS WHY I
SAY THAT WE SHOULD
ACCEPT IT WITHOUT
FEAR AND WITHOUT
RESERVATION,...
ACCEPT IT EVEN
THOUGH IT WILL
INVOLVE STRUGGLE
AND A CONVERSION
OF ATTITUDES -
AS A CALL
TO A NEW LIFE”

EVERYONE KNOWS HOW STRONG WAS CHARLES HOWARD'S CONCERN THAT THE MARIST INSTITUTE SHOULD SHOW IN A VERY BOLD WAY A CLEAR OPTION FOR THE POOR THROUGH CONCRETE GESTURES OF SOLIDARITY AT BOTH PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS.

During the eight years of his mandate, he spoke about this on various occasions, in his speeches and his circulars, going so far – we think – as influencing the XIX General Chapter itself on this matter.

One of the places where his thought becomes most audacious is the circular of 30 November 1990, which carries the same title as the remarkable encyclical of John-Paul II: “*Sollicitudo rei socialis*”, written at the end of 1987. Br Charles introduces the subject by recalling our tradition as sons of Champagnat, in insisting on the Founder's great love for the Pope and for his words. At the same time, he shows himself realistic and does not gloss over the difficulties that so many papal documents encounter in our time, the criticism they receive, and the scanty attention paid them by public opinion ... But this time, he estimates that *Sollicitudo rei socialis* is an especially important encyclical. It was written twenty years after the *Populorum progressio* of Pope Paul VI, precisely to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of that memorable document ... “*No Marist Brother should be ignorant of its contents: we should all be concerned with reflecting on its application to our lives and acting upon this.*” (297)

INTERDEPENDENCE AND SOLIDARITY

In the 2nd chapter he presents a brief summary of the encyclical, tying it in with the fundamental elements of *Populorum progressio*. He underlines the concepts of **interdependence** of all the nations of the Earth and of the ensuing duty of **solidarity**. He explains that the

REI socialis

BR MARIO MEUTI

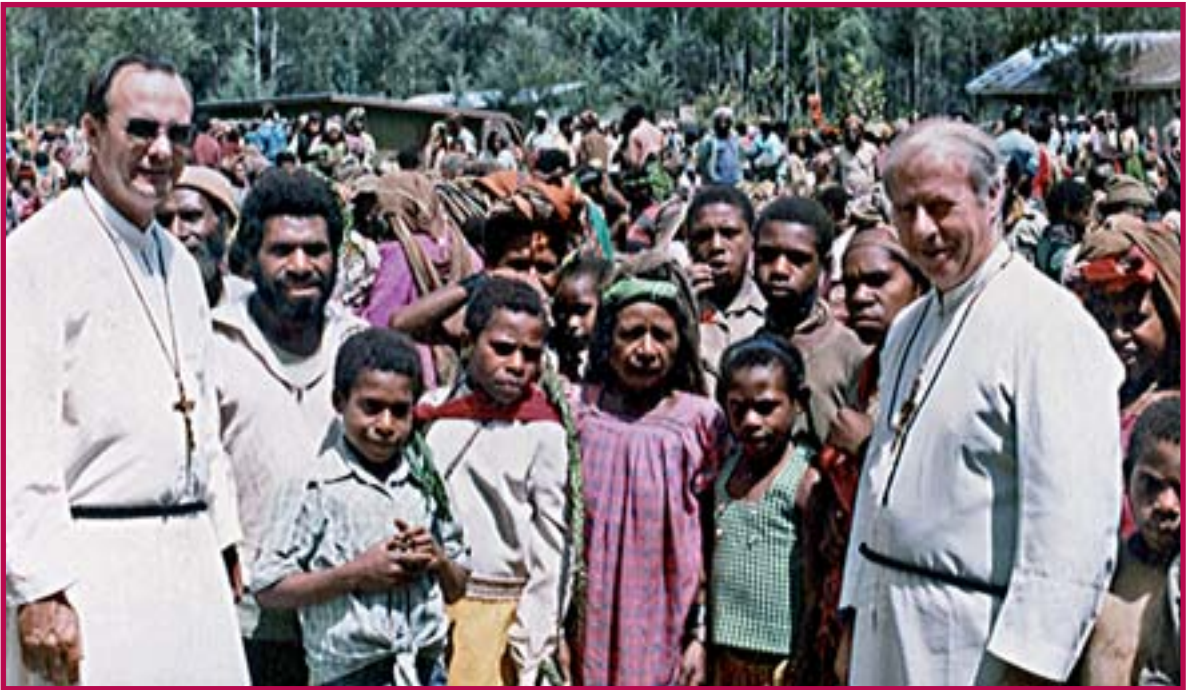
concept of human development involves **being** rather than **having**: *"The more one possesses, the more one wants, while deeper human hopes are stifled. The present picture is that the few who possess much are stunted because they want more and more, and the many who have little or nothing cannot succeed in realizing their basic human vocation... The Church itself has a grave responsibility. From of old the Church has understood that it is **our** task to relieve the misery of human suffering both near and far."* And he sums up in these audacious words: *"The needs of the poor even outweigh the*

"need" for costly decorations and sacred utensils in worship ...". They will serve no purpose, in fact, if the Church is not aiming to build, in the words of Paul VI, a *"civilization of love"*. (300)

After mentioning, in the 3rd chapter, some criticisms received by the encyclical, especially the embarrassment of the USA and numerous other observers over the distance taken by John-Paul II with regard to both socialism and western capitalism, Charles Howard consecrates the 4th chapter to offering the Institute a series of personal reflections on the encyclical itself. He has, moreover,



At a Marist school in a slum in Londrina, Paraná, Brasil. 1992



Papua New Guinea

with regard to the moment of the encyclical's appearance, the historic experience of 1989 with the collapse of the socialist bloc in East Europe and elsewhere.

"Brothers, both the world and the Church stand at the point of a historical watershed, a moment in the history of mankind which is critical for the lives of men and women for many generations to come. This moment, in a way rarely experienced in previous centuries, opens up new possibilities for human life." (307)

WHAT IS HINDERING US IS A BIPOLAR VISION OF THE WORLD

Our time is not simply *kronos* time -*kronos*, in the sense of the simple passing of days – explains Charles H., quoting the Jesuit John Haughey – but *kairos* time, that is to say, the favourable moment, the time of social events, the time of salvation and redemption ... In order to read it, we need more than economic-political analyses, but we should look at the facts from the basis of the great aspirations of the human heart : the refusal of the straitjacket of a bipolar vision of the world, the refusal of totalitarian regimes, the desires for freedom expressed in a special way by the young.

"However, and this is my second point, the question is, Brothers, do we view the world with eyes that see this time in human history as possibly an unparalleled *kairós* moment when the Holy Spirit is empowering men and women to change the world? Do we have the faith to believe

¹ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis n° 37. And again :
" ... It is important to note therefore that a world which is divided into blocs, sustained by rigid ideologies, and in which instead of interdependence and solidarity different forms of imperialism hold sway, can only be a world subject to structures of sin. (n° 36)

² Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, n° 47

that in God's providence there now lies within human possibility the power to reverse the seemingly unbreakable cycle of terrible poverty and violence for the vast proportion of humankind?" (308)

Even if he imagines the perplexity of many (What part can I, as an individual, be called to undertake in reversing the tide of history?), he insists still more: "First, in terms of seriousness, **we must understand that we are, all of us, called to respond to this invitation as a moral imperative.** That is the central premise of the encyclical." (309)

ALL CONCERNED BY THE PROGRESS OF HUMANITY

The departure point of the letter of John-Paul II – Charles H. goes on to explain – is this: rich and poor, all are involved and share the responsibility of working for true human progress. The so-called "decades of development" have not eliminated, not by a long way, the profound causes of underdevelopment; poverty has increased and affects other populations, and the rapidity of social change has carried the inequalities between human beings to the extreme. It is necessary to start again, putting at the centre concrete human persons, in their individuality, who suffer the unbearable burden of abuses caused by others. It is in referring to this that the pope makes use several times of the famous expression "**structures of sin**" *"to point out the true nature of the evil which faces us with respect to the development of peoples: it is a question of a moral evil, the fruit of many sins which lead to "structures of sin." To diagnose the evil in this way is to identify precisely, on the level of human conduct, the path to be followed in order to overcome it.*"

And by these words he responds to the question of individual engagement, which – he says "is not something that we can leave to those who may have a special interest in social matters. Personal involvement in responding to this situation is not optional, it is a demand of the Gospel." (312)

And quoting John-Paul II directly, he invites the Brothers to action: "Though it be with sorrow, it must be said that just as one may sin through self-

ishness and the desire for excessive profit and power, one may also be found wanting with regard to the urgent needs of multitudes of human beings submerged in conditions of underdevelopment, through fear, indecision and, basically, through cowardice."

So Brothers, it is undeniable that in this matter there is a call to action for each one of us." (313)

And, aware of the risk of being misunderstood, he insists: "When I speak of a call to action, I mean just that. We really have to resist the temptation to spiritualize this call, to shield ourselves from the very real concrete dilemmas which we should actively face, by simply withdrawing into prayer. ... Recently, the director of a well known renewal centre said that when he arranged meetings that dealt with personal spirituality he could hope for a ready response; but when he advertised meetings that dealt with peace, racial justice and Third World development he had far fewer participants." (313)

It is not a matter of feeling guilty in the personal moral sense, but of awakening our sensibility to the structures of sin which, also around us, perpetuate situations of injustice and grave discrimination. We will not succeed in changing things from one day to the next; all the same, the difficulty of the task should not leave us in indifference and apathy: *"To these let me add one more - the importance of teaching the Church's social doctrine and awakening "people's consciences to the problems that affect society. We involve our pupils in charitable works that bring them into contact with situations of poverty. (Con. 87.2)"* (314)

A special paragraph is consecrated to "interdependence and solidarity", two essential aspects of the pope's message:





Bangladesh

"The fact that men and women in various parts of the world feel personally affected by the injustices and violations of human rights committed in distant countries, countries which perhaps they will never visit, is a further sign of a reality transformed into awareness, thus acquiring a moral connotation. It is above all a question of **interdependence**, sensed as a system determining relationships in the contemporary world ... When interdependence becomes recognized in this way, the correlative response as a moral and social attitude, as a "virtue," is **solidarity**. This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all "

PREFERENTIAL LOVE FOR THE POOR

The 5th chapter is entirely consecrated to commenting on the expression of the pope: "**Love of preference for the poor**". An expression which coincides with the one in our Constitutions (art. 34 and other references): "*Now let me cite some of the words of the encyclical. They are more eloquent than anything I can say. The love of preference for the*

³ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, n° 37 et 38

⁴ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, n° 42

⁵ Cf. Opening speech of the XIX General Chapter - 1993

⁶ XIX General Chapter : Document on Solidarity n° 20

⁷ Remarks Br Emili SG at the close the XXI General Chapter, Rome, October 10, 2009.

www.champagnat.org/203.php?caso=xxidocumentos_view&id=30

poor "is a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness... Today, given the worldwide dimension which the social questions has assumed, this preference for the poor, and the decisions which it inspires in us, cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care and, above all, those without hope of a better future. It is impossible not to take account of the existence of these realities. To ignore them would mean becoming like the "rich man" who pretended not to know the beggar Lazarus lying at his gate" (Lk 16,19-31) . Strong words!" (322)

The task is not simple and can cause fear, but Charles is convinced that this appeal comes to us as an authentic gift of the Holy Spirit, which urges us to put aside our reservations and fears to undertake a true conversion ... for the rest, he adds, it is already a reality in the lives of numerous Brothers and this represents a new vitality for the Provinces.

The last part of the circular insists on the necessity of direct contact with the poor, as the royal road to acquiring a new sensitivity in this area, changing our vision of the world and responding with the personal and institutional conversion the Church and the present time are asking of us. He recommends that all have experiences, even brief ones, in contexts of real poverty, in launching experiences that he has called many times "**pilgrimages of solidarity**". Experiences he demanded explicitly of all the Provincials before the General Conference of Veranopolis in 1989, of all the delegates to the General Chapter of 1993, then suggested to so many Brothers during his multiple meetings: "*It is possible for some Brothers to live in mental or physical ghettos where the poor are nothing but insignificant statistics.*" (325)

The XIX General Chapter was strongly influenced by this "social bent" impressed on the Institute through authentic fidelity to the heritage of Fr Champagnat. In starting with the title: **Audacity and Hope**, and in continuing with the **Message to all the Marist Brothers**, whose point of departure is "hearing the cry of the world : the cry of the poor, the cry of the street children and the abandoned children" ... but also the cry of hope which

rises in so many places to suggest to us new and audacious appeals. And there is a **document on solidarity** which begins precisely by citing the "*pilgrimages of solidarity*" made by each capitulant, in order to propose new and bold options to the Provinces, to the communities and to each Brother: "*This is the hour for us to accept, decisively and unequivocally, the evangelical call for solidarity.*"

Subsequent developments have been numerous: in all the Provinces of the Institute new social works have seen the light, in the service of the poorest and most marginalised children, solidarity groups and associations almost everywhere, thanks also to the pressure coming from lay people and the restructuring of the Administrative Units. **BIS** (International Bureau of Solidarity) was born at Institute level, and from it has come **FMSI-Onlus** (*Marist Foundation for International Solidarity*) to accompany and finance solidarity and development projects, and to devote itself to the new challenge of defending and promoting the Rights of the Child and of youth at the UNO headquarters in Geneva.

"To see the world through the eyes of a poor child" is the slogan created by **Br Seán Sammon**, who guided the Institute from 2001 to 2009, and taken up by the new Superior General, **Br Emili Turú**, who, at the close of the XXI General Chapter, made the promise: "*Let us hope that in eight years time, when we look back, we will be able to say that the Institute has taken very significant steps in that direction: to be experts in the defence of the rights of children and the young.*"



Circular: THE CHAMPAGNAT

“WE ARE CALLED
TO HELP
AND COMPLEMENT
ONE ANOTHER”

TO REMEMBER BR. CHARLES is TO REMEMBER HIM FOR HIS BEAUTIFUL INSIGHTS INTO THE PATH TO COMMUNION OF LAY MEN AND WOMEN AND BROTHERS. HE WAS “AHEAD OF HIS TIME” OF THAT FUTURE OF COMMUNION OF THE LAST GENERAL CHAPTER.

He had insight into aspects of the *new era for the Marist charism*. The thinking and the vision that he develops in his 1991 circular, *The Champagnat Movement of the*

Marist Family, A Grace for All of Us, maintains its living relevance and continues to inspire the reflections of the Secretariat for the Laity. This circular and his intervention at the XIX General Chapter, *Laity and Brothers Together in Mission*, are the sources of the citations that appear in these lines.

It is a blessing and a joy for all, both Brothers and laity, Br Charles would say, to have the power to share a common richness and to live together an exciting apostolic and spiritual adventure. So, years later the Assembly of Mendes would speak of a common charismatic vocation, which some of us live as consecrated persons and others as lay people. It was the clear conviction of Br. Charles when he stated that “we are called to help one another and to complement each other”.

In the above mentioned circular as well as in other of his writings he liked to recall the Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, which says that in the Church-communion the states of life are related in such a way among themselves that they are ordered one to the other. They are complementary and at the same time diverse modalities, so that each one of them has its original and unmistakable physiognomy, and at the same time each one of them is in relationship with the others and at their service. Br. Charles had this certainty: “We all share the Christian vocation and this implies that we all must encourage one another in our different gifts and individual call-

I knew Br Charles on his visit to Colombia in 1989, the centenary of the arrival of the Marist Brothers in this country. A very simple man, approachable, affable. Always ready to listen very specific. His circulars, no matter in what group we shared them, invited us to continue to be infatuated by Champagnat and his style of life. He always replied in writing to the messages sent him. Despite his occupations, he took the time to tell the person, you are important to me

MARÍA EUGENIA, PASTO, COLOMBIA

MOVEMENT of THE MARIST Family

BR JAVIER ESPINOSA AND ANA SARRATE

ings. We do not consider on call as superior to another, but we support all of them. With this idea in mind, I extend an invitation to everyone to participate in this important gathering, to work for the development of all vocations, lay, religious and priestly". He was convinced that our specific vocations, without confusing themselves, mutually enlighten one another, and we are for each other a constant source of richness. The complementarity which Br. Charles mentions meant for him a greater association in diverse forms, including a greater number of volunteers in our missions, the formation of mixed communities and, logically, the empowering of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (Cf. the Circular CMMF). His thinking was that this vocational complementarity of brothers and laity would allow us to strengthen our specific identities. These are his words referring to the religious brother: "Sharing with them (laymen and laywomen) spiritually will reveal new depths of our vocation as brothers".

If already talk was beginning of the charism as a gift to the Church, he knew it to refer openly to our Institute. He repeatedly expressed that the Marist charism would be enriched by the laity. This paragraph from his intervention at the Chapter is very beautiful: "The charism of an Institute does not belong to that Institute exclusively. Charisms are for the Church and belong to the Church. We are the heirs of Marcellin's charism and, for that very reason, its guardians, but it is for us a joy and a responsibility to be able to share this gift, and as I've already said on some occasions, the laity can show us new aspects of the charism, to the degree they live it



more fully. And this does not have to be a one-way communication, for in communion, it is obvious that we need one another. When we have reached the point where the laity consider themselves as co-responsible for the heritage of the charism of Marcellin, then we will be able to sing a jubilant Alleluia". Basically, Br. Charles shows that with the participation of the laity in the charism, Marist life is challenged and enriched, and that together, brothers and lay people, we must face the future of the charism.

Some of Br. Charles' convictions were expressed in the General Chapter of 1993, to which 14 laypeople were invited by him. They were in attendance for two weeks. The Message of the Chapter summed it up thus: "The few days which fourteen laypeople spent with us during this Chapter were certainly an historic moment. With them, and thanks to them, we became more conscious that the only way for us to take on our mission in the

Church is in close communion with them". And the Chapter approved this proposition: "The XIX General Chapter reaffirms the determination of the capitulants to share, ever more and more, their spirituality and their mission with lay people. The Chapter requests the Brother Superior General and his Council to invite the Brothers and communities of the Institute to travel further along this path of communion". It was something new for the capitular documents to refer to lay people and brothers together. The lay presence would appear afterwards in assemblies and provincial chapters, in commissions and animation groups. A new era of communion was beginning in our Institute.

THE LAITY ARE PREPARED TO WRITE A PAGE OF HISTORY WITH US

If Br. Charles speaks of complementarity it is because he believes in the lay vocation, in the equality of all believers, in their power within the mission of the Church. And so he will recall the lovely words of some author: «The laity are prepared to write a page of history with us». And thus he believes it beneficial in his Circular to situate things in the context of the Church and the world, and in the new theological vision on the laity. He turned out to be very clairvoyant on the matter. Recalling the Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, he says that the dignity, the spirituality, the mission and the responsibility of lay people were

*Lay people
at the XIX
General Chapter*



proclaimed in a resounding manner. The entire Church (clergy, religious and laity) constitutes a communion; everyone conjointly participates in the prophetic and priestly mission of Jesus Christ; all jointly are called to holiness. Assuming that corresponding differences exist in the assignments of the priesthood and the laity, these should not be stressed to the point of overlooking the more fundamental and vital principle of Christian communion and the equality of all believers. There is a proper place for the authority of the hierarchy and the priests in the Church. But that place, whose origin we find in Jesus' intention to give leadership to the Church, must not contradict his more basic vision of a community of disciples which had to live in a spirit of brotherhood, equality and service.

His affirmations are inspired likewise by Vatican II. The Council, says Br. Charles, insisted that the fundamental truth at the heart of the Church is communion, based on the union of the authentic believer with Christ through Baptism. In their quality as baptized believers, that is the inalienable right of everybody. The basic equality, as much in dignity as in responsibility, derives from the direct union of each believer with Christ through baptism.

With much hope, at the close of the XIX General Chapter, they would speak of springtime and change: For me, one of the clearest signs of hope in this springtime is the clearer idea we have of the nature of the Church, the Church as a missionary communion, the Church as the People of God, in which there are different ministries, various charisms and functions, but in which all are united as disciples of Christ and witnesses of his resurrection, committed to follow the same path of love, of hope and of service, united by the same Spirit to continue the mission of Jesus. Our generation is called to build this new model of Church, a Church that more vigorously promotes participation, through which the Christian people feel animated and helped with resources and formation to make real to others the mystery of the Church and to make sense of their lives.

Out of this hope, so Gospel-oriented and so Marist, arise the invitations that Br. Charles makes in his writings. I mention some of them:



- We find ourselves at a very important moment in the history of the Church, a moment of rebirth, a return to the style of the early Church when lay people played a total role in the mission. One of our priorities now consists in promoting this rebirth, with delicacy, courage and vision. If we do not do this, then we will have diminished the Church of the future, the Church, the People of God, the Body of Christ ... all that we love.
- We should work together to develop the ecclesial conscience, the sense of belonging to the mystery of the Church as a communion. Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper, "that all may be one", is a program of life and action for all of us.
- Let us do all we can to assure that the laity can accept this challenge of playing a lead role in the mission of the Church.

The ecclesiology that Br. Charles so much liked to refer to returns the charism and the mission to the heart of the Church, in such a way that the laity are able to live the foundational charism in ways other than those typical of religious life, and they can live it in an integral way, in relation to the varied facets of the person, not to all the potentialities of the charism, that overflows to each group, be they brothers, Lay Marists or priests.

Br. Charles, like the story of the Indian chief, brought us the gift of a better future for our tribe. It was his vision of a new charismatic summons for a wider tent, where more would fit, where one would speak of complementarity and communion, of new facets of the Marist charism, of new models of Church, of new depths of the vocation of brother, of the gift of the vocation of the Lay Marist.

BROTHER CHARLES HOWARD, THANK YOU!

BR JAVIER ESPINOSA

**“It is a blessing
and a joy for us
to share
our common
richness and
to live together
an exciting
spiritual
and apostolic
venture”**

WHEN I REREAD BR. CHARLES' CIRCULAR ON THE CREATION OF THE CHAMPAGNAT MOVEMENT OF THE MARIST FAMILY, I ENCOUNTER A PROPHETIC MAN: HIS WORDS ARE SO CURRENT THAT THEY STILL CONTINUE TO BE A GRAND REFERENCE FOR THE PRESENT.

Through them is reflected a man who loves the Church and who therefore wishes it to be more authentic. A Church in dialogue with the world and in construction with it in order to be more meaningful.

His concern with responding to it is very evident in the entire text. After analyzing some challenges faced by the Church in its work of evangelization, he reminds us that “We are at a very important moment in the history of the Church - a moment of rebirth, a return to the practice of the early Church when lay people played a full role in the mission of the Church. One of our most urgent calls now is to promote that re-birth, with sensitivity, courage and vision. If we do not do this then we will have diminished the Church of the future, the Church, the people of God, the Body of Christ, that we all love.”

LIVE WITH PASSION MARIST MISSION

Brother Charles “discovered us”, he perceived the reality of so many lay men and lay women tuning in to the spirituality of Marcellin, how we were living passionately the Marist mission and from our lay reality we were bringing a new way of living that gift.

Moreover, his words continue to challenge us today. He envisioned a new family, although just beginning, in which brothers and lay people would move forward together and giving greater vitality to the charism. He encouraged us to have experiences in community, to dare to write what the Spirit was stirring up in us on sharing and living this spirituality, to come to feel that we are truly responsible for the growth of this family in the Church.

His enthusiasm for that reality led him to write: “So, Brothers, you are invited to help in the developing and nurturing of these lay groups, to the sharing of our charism, this gift destined for the good of the Church.” “Lay people are ready to write a page of history with us”. (Br. Charles)

Many brothers, encouraged by these words, accompanied us in the adventure of growing as Christians and Marists, creating formative processes for the laity, starting communities or life groups, encouraging us to take the initiative and making us feel part of their family.

Thanks to these brothers who trusted in the spirit that arose after Vatican II, we were becoming more conscious of our lay vocation and



of our role in the building up of the Kingdom of God. They showed us the person of Marcellin and they infected us with their enthusiasm for living after the style of Mary.

THE OPPORTUNITY THAT MANY WERE HOPING FOR

The Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family was the opportunity that many of us lay men and lay women were hoping for to commit ourselves more as Marists. Brother Charles told us: "You are very, very welcome in 'your' Marist home. You have been living in it for a long time already by your way of living, feeling and acting. Now you have chosen to live the faith and the apostolate more deeply by becoming other Champagnats in the setting of your own life, beginning with your own homes." (Br. Charles)

But not only were the number of fraternities of the Champagnat Movement growing, there were also appearing other lay groups and communities which, taking up this novel invitation, felt the need to deepen their Marist identity and to live as Marists in their lay state of life because, as

Brother Charles also told us, "The Spirit is creative and works in many different ways; the Champagnat Movement is one of them, but it is not the only one".

From his own experience, he suggests insights and valuable tracks to develop our spirituality, life in communion and lay mission. He reminds us that this Movement is "in no way a manner of living the Marist religious life 'in the world': it is a way of living the life of the lay person in the world" and as such the development of a true lay spirituality involves being aware de makes himself present to us as we are and in the ordinary flow of our life through our personal history, our marriage and family, friendships, work, daily concerns, the social realities in which we are immersed seeking to integrate life and prayer in order to arrive at a spirituality of the daily and the ordinary. It challenges us to develop a lay Marist spirituality that will further enrich the charism, and it reminds us that the mission is one (Jesus Christ's) but that the way of serving others will have in the laity diverse forms ... Neither can we forget the role of women in the Church and the pending task of enabling them to engage themselves in the mission in all its dimensions. What

I knew Brother Charles Howard at the Hermitage. It was not a planned meeting. I was simply there and wanted to talk with a group of youth animators who were beginning to become familiar with Marist things "at the sources". I remember a man nearby with a permanent smile. Over the years, in the Fraternities, we have studied his Circular on the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family on various occasions and I am always struck by its freshness. It seems to have been written yesterday. I thank God for his life and his intuitions, especially about the laity. The Spirit grants us to be Champagnat today..

MARTA, BILBAO, SPAIN

stands out is their conviction and delicacy in inviting us to the idea that among Marists the effort be made to not lose the wealth that comes with a female perspective of the Marist charism.

How happy Charles would be to see so many of his insights confirmed in the document "Gathered Around the Same Table: the Vocation of the Lay Marists of Champagnat"! We have a prime document coming out of our Lay Marist reality which defines itself based on our own words and experiences. We could

do a comparative study of both documents—Brother Charles' circular and the document "Gathered Around the Same Table"—and we would find many parallels ... 20 years afterwards!

Presently there are about 280 fraternities of the Champagnat Movement with some 3,200 members, and in addition a rich variety of groups and communities in which we lay people share our Marist life: occasions of shared prayer, formation, the mission of "making Jesus Christ known and loved", the joys and difficulties of daily life ... It is more and more frequent that there are held meetings of fraternities or lay groups at provincial and even regional levels. Already some animation structures or teams have been created for them by their own members, at the provincial level. We are aware that we are responsible for giving life and for being creative in order to respond as Lay Marists in today's world.

Charles Howard in the XIX General Chapter with two Lay persons



THE COMMUNION BETWEEN BROTHERS AND LAITY

On the road already traveled, we can confirm through our experience many of Brother Charles' ideas, among which we can highlight the mutual wealth based on the communion between brothers and laity. "It is a blessing and a joy for us, Brothers and lay persons together, to share our common richness and to live together an exciting spiritual and apostolic venture."

I believe that Br. Charles planted the seed that led the members of the XXI General Chapter to proclaim: "We see our Marist future as a communion of people in the charism of Champagnat, where our specific vocations will be mutually enriching".

There is much more road to travel, but as Brother Charles invited us, "We place this work in the hands of Mary... we may be sure that she welcomes our efforts to draw others closer to us in our life and mission"

ANA SARRATE

MIC AND development work in Africa: THE imprint of BROTHER CHARLES HOWARD ON Africa

BR EUGÈNE KABANGUKA

*Charles Howard,
at a meeting
of superiors
in Africa.
December 1986*



« HE WHO HAS PLANTED A TREE BEFORE
DYING HAS NOT LIVED IN VAIN ». THIS
CONCERNS THE FRUIT TREE WHICH NOURISHES
HIS OWN CHILDREN AND THOSE OF NEIGH-
BOURS FOR GENERATION AFTER GENERATION.

This African proverb applies very well to Brother Charles Howard.

Following the XVIII General Chapter, Charles placed special attention on vocations ministry and formation, redefin-

ing of apostolic priorities, promotion of inculturation, revitalisation of identity in a context where the Brother's vocation is seen as an unfulfilled priestly vocation.

I had the grace of conversing with the Superior General about the activities of the Friends of Marcellin Champagnat, of which I was one of the animator-founders, together with Brother Marino Primiceri and then Brother Rossigno Paul at Bukavu (ITFM). He was very attentive and I did not think for a moment that I was in the presence of a great man.

UKUNDA LOUIS, KINSHASA,
RÉP. DÉM. DU CONGO

VOCATIONS AND FORMATION: THE MARIST INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF NAIROBI, A RESPONSE TO THE URGENT FORMATION NEEDS OF THE YOUNG BROTHERS IN AFRICA

We have read the circular on vocations and agree with Charles Howard that our Institute has no pride if it has no children. It matters little what part of the world these latter come from. We say in Africa that «the beautiful woman is the one with the child on her back ».

His interest in vocations in Africa took concrete shape when, at the end of his mandate as superior general, he offered himself to help out as formator at the novitiate of Kutama in Zimbabwe. But the imprint he left best known in Africa and in the Marist world was the creation of the Marist International Centre in Nairobi.

Brother Charles Howard gave himself as one of his priorities the creation of the Marist International Centre, known as Marist International Centre or MIC, in 1986. A few months after his election, he sent Brother Powell Prieur to Harare, Abidjan, Kinshasa and Nairobi to study the possibility of setting up an inter-African scholasticate. Without delay, the major superiors of the continent were consulted. There were only the provinces of Madagascar and South Africa, while the other missions were grouped in districts or sectors dependant on Rome or other provinces of Europe and Canada.

We benefitted from the unconditional support of Cardinal Otunga, archbishop of Nairobi at the time, and the other bishops of Kenya. It was in the Cardinal's name that the land for MIC was purchased, and he made an act of cession shortly before his death. We also benefitted from the collaboration and sharing of human resources of the Catholic University of East Africa and its constituent colleges. There was never any competition. The Commission of Higher Education (CHE) assiduously accompanied our process of developing programmes until it granted us accreditation.

EXTENSION OF MIC, A VIBRANT TESTIMONY TO AUTHENTIC AFRICAN BROTHERHOOD

From 1989, what Charles Howard and the superiors of the Marist Brothers on the African Continent had envisaged as a scholasticate for our Brothers, became gradually open to other religious communities, then to lay people, all the while progressively diversifying its programmes of religious and academic formation. In fact, an African adage well says that « anyone who does not want to feed the children of his neighbour, will never have his own satisfied ». This can be applied to the whole Marist world at a time when we are talking



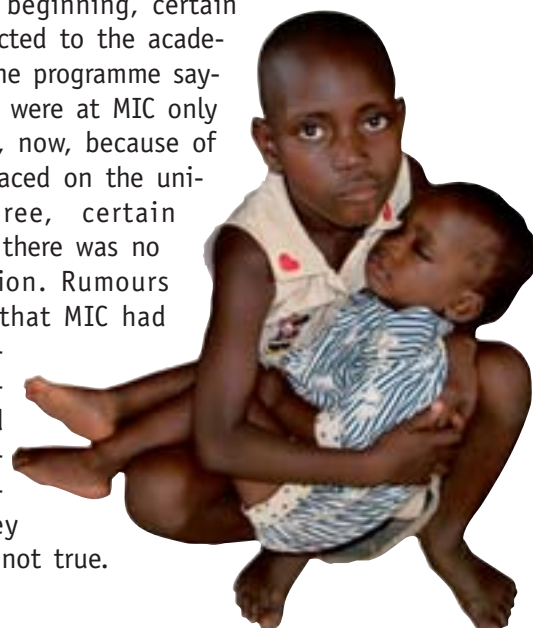
about a Marial Church, of sharing human and material resources.

When we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the birth of MIC, in 1996, one noted that, being an International Centre, it put the accent on internationality and interculturality in the world, which was becoming more and more a global village. The formation team and the academic staff from five continents had shaped its welcoming structure and its family spirit. The student body had opened up to the many countries of Africa, to India, Italy and Portugal. It was at this time that the idea of university status emerged. The Pontifical Urban University, to which MIC was affiliated, had just pointed out that it had no Faculty of Education to continue giving an academic degree in education. Moreover, in 1999, with the Convention of Bologna, all the west and central European universities, including the Urbaniana, entered a new educational system standardised for the whole of Europe. Thus it was that MIC passed from three years of formation to four. At the same time, in Kenya, the national Commission for Higher Education (CHE) warned that foreign universities, not accredited by national bodies, had not the right to confer diplomas within the country. This made us give up the project we had of affiliating with Marist College, Poughkeepsie.

Brother Charles Howard came to Nairobi in person and we went to begin discussions with the

Commission for Higher Education (CHE). He was no longer superior general, but he considered MIC his favourite child. CHE directed us to the Catholic University of East African (CUEA) and the negotiations immediately began. And to become part of CUEA, it was necessary to introduce all the programmes so as to be open to the hundreds of young Africans in search of higher education, and to make of our Brothers well qualified religious educators. The Catholic University also required our programme be extended to four years, before approving MIC as one of its constituent colleges in 2002.

While at the beginning, certain Brothers objected to the academic part of the programme saying that they were at MIC only for formation, now, because of the accent placed on the university degree, certain thought that there was no more formation. Rumours even spread that MIC had become nothing but a university and that the Institute was wasting its money there. This is not true.



Certainly in this opening out we must not forget what our ancestors have well taught us, that « the egg does not dance with the stone » or « a calabash full of milk always keeps its distance from a fight between clubs ». This means that the Brothers in formation must take care to preserve their religious identity and not become mere university students. So it is a question of balance. A good apostle of youth must have a good human, religious and academic formation. Personal accompaniment makes sure this balance is maintained.

This initiative resulted, in September 2011, in it being accredited as a University College (Marist International University College – MIUC). At present, 105 young Brothers are following their post-novitiate formation there, and more than 500 young religious and lay people benefit from its facilities for their human and religious formation. Some of these youth had no other chance of access to university because of their poor academic results, and the Marist Brothers have created remedial and upgrading programmes. Certain ones take only six months or an academic year to gain the qualification which enables them to follow university studies in the Institutions of their choice. So MIUC is known in Africa for its innovative offer of sowing hope in the hearts of a good number of young people who can now dream of a career while being good witnesses of God. Here we observe that the doors are open to all young people without distinction of faith or origin. This creates an environment that is ecumenical, inter-religious, and intercultural. Moreover, the Brothers have direct contact with adolescent youth.

A good number of Brothers have not understood the change that has taken place in the formation programme. The spirit remains the same



I was privileged to live with Br Charles on several occasions: as a student in the General House in Rome; in Valpré-Lyon where he led sessions during the Course for Formators; and during the visits he made to Brazil. Among a number of fine memories I have of him, I would underline his interest in and understanding of the Church in Latin America and in Brazil in particular. This impacted on me because he valued these places as much as those of his origin (Oceania) and of his base in animating and governing the Institute (Europe). He had a deep understanding of Latin American theology and had befriended a number of its bishops, theologians, and religious engaged in the struggle for social justice for the poor. This background enriched his reflections on the Social Teaching of the Church, on Vatican II, and on *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, a document that he was very familiar with. His knowledge and passion for the poor enabled him to guide the Institute in the area of social transformation and the human promotion of children and youth.

JOÃO GUTENBERG, MANAUS, BRAZIL

but the content has changed, following the present context in which we find our mission in Africa. In the last 15 years, this continent has undergone breathtaking changes on the educational, social and political planes. And as a Mossi proverb says: « If the river changes course, the cayman has to follow ». The formation programme has to respond to the needs of the Brothers and the society of the third millennium. Moreover, it has to be open to the world of today's young, and especially be with them in a very significant way, responding to their questions, meeting their expectations and nourishing their dreams, while offering them light.

In recognition of this opening to the world, the Kenyan civil authorities, in collaboration with MIC's neighbours, have just sealed the road which passes by the community and given it the name of Marist Lane.

THE YOUNG BROTHERS ARE ACCOMPANIED ON THEIR VOCATIONAL JOURNEY

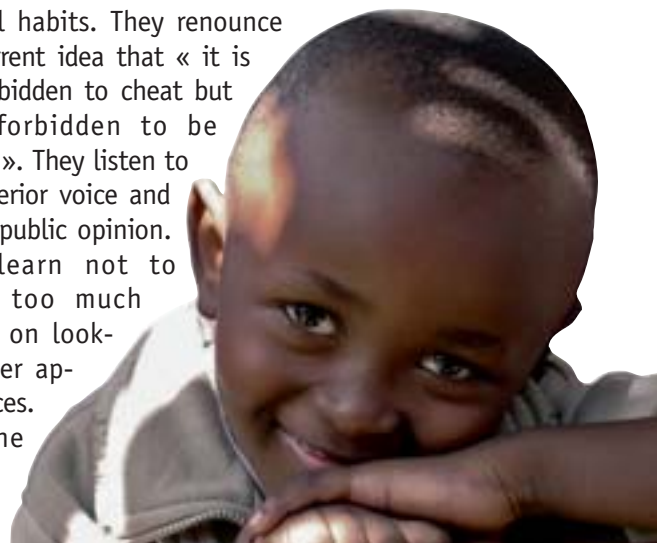
The Brothers live in small fraternities of 12 to 14 members. Two formators animate each fraternity. This means that the community actually numbers 120 Brothers. The size of one province.

One of the reasons for which MIC was founded was to assure that the young Brothers were accompanied on their vocational journey. And this respects African culture in which the young are always initiated and accompanied by their elders. The adage

says that « whoever has seen the sun before you has been moulded by the wisdom before you ». In fact, he has accumulated a lot of wisdom after having seen God's intervention in the numerous events of life.

And the one who is accompanied knows he is the first person responsible for the process of transformation he has to carry out: « the log can remain three years in the lagoon, it will never be a cayman ». There has to be the will and capacity to change. And faced with difficulties, everyone knows that one can stumble on a stone and be capable of climbing a mountain. This means that one need not be discouraged by trials. It is necessary rather to make all the efforts possible towards a better life. Don't we say that the person who wants the honey has to have the courage to face the bees?

During formation, in personal and group accompaniment, the brothers learn to transcend cultural habits. They renounce the current idea that « it is not forbidden to cheat but it is forbidden to be caught ». They listen to the interior voice and not to public opinion. They learn not to spend too much energy on looking after appearances. And the adage



rather than pretenders, to recognize personal strengths and limitations. Thus they accept personal responsibility rather than hiding behind the collective sin which in the long run becomes the norm. Little by little, they begin to denounce the legalization of bad practices which become norms simply because they are the usage of the majority. In addition, acceptance of personal responsibility means that one's faults are not projected onto other persons: if you are ugly, don't blame the mirror!

PROMOTION OF INCULTURATION, LOCAL LEADERSHIP, AND REVITALISATION OF IDENTITY

During the Marist Pan-African Congress in 1992 in Nairobi, Charles Howard was anxious to invite an African bishop anthropologist, Monseigneur Sarpong of Kumasi in Ghana, to talk about Christian life in the African context, emphasizing that Christ preceded the missionaries on African soil, not only as a refugee in Egypt, but also through his spirit, which inspired the good ancestral values which must be respected if the Gospel is to take root. For this purpose, he insisted with the provinces which had missions in Africa on local leadership. Let us note that it was in 1992 that he erected the province of Nigeria-Ghana.

Participants in the congress well remember his presentation on « The Sacrament of the Brother » using an English verb from his personal dictionary: « TO BROTHER », to signify that our identity, our spirituality and our mission are inseparable. He insisted that every encounter, especially with children, is an opportunity for loving and evangelising.

The African values of community and solidarity were well emphasized so as to show that one does not live for himself alone or all by himself.

In fact, it is proven that « for a child to grow, a whole village is needed ». Each one is responsible for all and all are responsible for each one. And instead of living in pride, one lives in dependence for all one has received from society. Thus, individualism, preoccupation with personal well-being, exploitation especially of the young and the poor, would be opposed to the law of gratitude, gratuity, and solidarity. In response to this call to solidarity, the province of Belgium-Holland of the time created a fund for the formation of African teachers with considerable sums over 10 years.

Sincerity is another value on which the congress insisted. In fact, everyone knows that the lie produces flowers but no fruit. This was a call to persevere faithfully in one's vocation.

We know that it was for his integrity that Charles Howard was named an official observer of the de-



mocratic elections in South Africa which saw Nelson Mandela carry off the presidency of the nation in 1994.

DEVELOPMENT: TO BE LEAVEN OF TRANSFORMATION FOR OUR SOCIETY

It is necessary to change the adage according to which « it is not the one who is hungry that eats, but the one who has the food ». This is inadmissible in a society which shouts loudly that solidarity is one of its fundamental values.

At its creation, the Marist International Centre of Nairobi was a contextualisation of the Hermitage community. The Brothers were prepared to make themselves capable of anything. The development department was one of the characteristics of the formation programme. The Brothers learned to supply the ordinary needs of the community. Thus, there were workshops for carpentry, motor mechanics, welding, electrical work, agriculture, etc. After 15 years, it was realized that it was necessary to enter the world of interdependence. One had to be realistic: one cannot do everything. All the same, formation remains centred on the mystery of redemption and invites active participation in placing one's forces and talents at the service of society. And rather than keep one's hand held out for more, it is necessary to produce and take pride in the produce of one's efforts. Especially as everyone knows that "when gathering becomes too easy, bending down becomes difficult". We can no longer return to the civilisation of gathering! The land was given to us to make it bear fruit. Africa holds unlimited wealth, but it remains the poorest because these riches are rather sources of conflict. One is seated on buried treasure while nursing one's destitution! Can we be resigned and let this situation last?

When we applied for accreditation as a University College, the CHE asked us to identify our specific contribution by rapport with the Universities of Kenya and the other Colleges in Nairobi. Ours was that religious studies and development studies are the two very important constituent axes of our programme. We consider passion for God and com-



passion for humanity to be the *raison d'être* for all the other options. Only passion and compassion can cause human beings to accept all life's risks. Audacity and creativity are the fruit of this fire within.

The students and staff of MIC, now MIUC, are called to be leaven of transformation. And the young Brothers who rub shoulders with other students are very important agents. The different workshops and extra-curricular activities consist of listening to the calls to transform our society and our church in order to carry all the changes necessary to an integral human development.

Charles Howard had found the encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* of Pope John Paul II, « An Urgent Appeal » to engage us in favour of improving the human condition, and we have no excuse:

«Nothing, then, says the Pope, justifies despair or pessimism or inertia. It must be said with sadness, but it must be said; just as one can sin through egoism and the excessive appetite for wealth and power, one can also commit faults, when confronted with the urgent needs of multitudes of human beings plunged in the situation of under-development, through fear, indecision and basically through cowardice... (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis No 47).

A PROPOSAL IN CONCLUSION

The MIUC could be even more influential if it took some initiatives to strengthen the bases of the culture of peace and reconciliation.

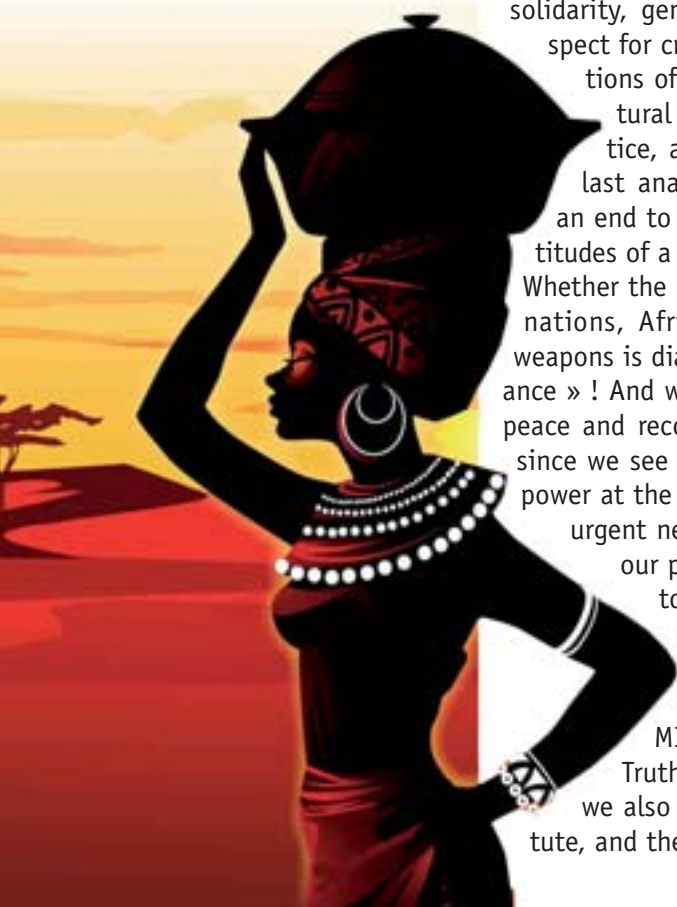
Everyone agrees that the African continent is very rich in values which should lead to unity and universal brotherhood, but unfortunately the many visages of apartheid constitute a destructive gangrene awaiting a painful amputation. As

said above, Brother Charles Howard took part in the peace process in South Africa, and he invites every Marist on the continent to contribute to the transcending of the various divisions. If formation in such an intercultural milieu does not succeed in relieving the burdens of tribalism, regionalism, nepotism, corruption, the traffic of influence and every anachronism which demeans African society, then personnel and material have been invested in vain. One would have quenched the fire which burned in the heart of Brother Charles Howard when he said that our vocation is to be brothers for all: TO BROTHER.

After the call of Pope Benedict XVI to construct a just and lasting peace in Africa, Marist International University College should make evangelization its first priority through all its programmes. The Pope affirms that « *the face of evangelization takes today the name of reconciliation, « a condition indispensable for installing in Africa relations of justice between men and for constructing an equitable and lasting peace in respect for each individual and all peoples ; a peace which [...] is open to the contributions of all persons of good will beyond respective religious, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and social appearances »* (Africae Munus, 174).

This call rings very loudly on this continent torn by civil wars and struggles for influence. Evangelization should reach the depths of the culture and transform it so that the African values of fraternity, solidarity, generosity, hospitality, relationship with the divine, respect for creation, etc. may be lived effectively beyond considerations of clan and tribe. The fruit of international and intercultural experience should be peace, reconciliation, and justice, and the overcoming of any form of chauvinism. In the last analysis, internationality and interculturality should put an end to the apartheid which subsists still in the hearts and attitudes of a good number of Africans, Brothers included.

Whether the politicians of all parties or the preachers of all denominations, Africans proclaim loudly: « one of our most powerful weapons is dialogue » or again « we are a people of peace and tolerance » ! And what do we see? Certainly, there is a basis for dialogue, peace and reconciliation as proclaimed values, but it is very fragile since we see people running blindly behind ideologues thirsting for power at the expense of their fellow citizens. To respond to such an urgent need in Africa, should we not be developing dialogue in our programmes of formation and in our works? I would like to propose that the promotion of peace and reconciliation constitute one of the important elements of a course in resolving conflicts to be introduced in the programme for the brothers and the other students of MIUC. There would be means of inspiration from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa. But we also know that the Jesuits have just created a Peace Institute, and they would be able to enrich us.



MAPAC in Asia-Oceania: FORESIGHT AND COURAGE TO OPEN INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS

BR MANUEL V. DE LEON



Br Charles inaugurates MAPAC. June 1993

I FIRST MET BRO. CHARLES HOWARD WHEN I WAS A YOUNG SCHOLASTIC IN MARBEL, SOUTH COTABATO, PHILIPPINES.

It was one hot summer in May of 1977, we were teaching catechism to the children at the nearby village, when I got the chance to have a conversation with Bro. Charles. We sat down under the tree and at the same time looking at the children playing in the field. These children were on their summer holiday break from the public school. To keep them busy during their vacation from school, some Brothers organized the "Flores de Mayo" where children

are gathered in the nearby chapel to have devotion to the Blessed Mother and at the same time told them Bible stories and taught them basic prayers.

He was then a newly elected Councilor General visiting the Philippines. Since it was our first meeting, he asked me about my family background and my life as a young Brother. He impressed me as a very approachable, kind, and very much interested in the young people. While doing the "interview" (accompaniment was not yet in vogue during that period), he would make some observations about the children "horsing" around.

In 1985, he was elected Superior General. As Superior General, his visit to the Philippines became more frequent. He gave a retreat and facilitated a Province Chapter in 1988. It was in this particular gathering of the Brothers when Bro. Renato Cruz was installed Provincial while still serving as member of the General Council.

During his term as Superior General, he had the foresight and the courage of opening two International Post Novitiate Formation Houses in Nairobi, Kenya and Marikina, Metro Manila, Philippines.

Out of these two Houses of Formation, I can only speak about the Marist Asia Center (MAC) and later on became Marist Asia Pacific Center (MAPAC) .

I was President of Marist School, Marikina from 1988 until 2003. During the early years of my term as the head of the school, I was a witness to Brothers from the General Administration including Bro.

*In the Philippines.
1988*



Charles coming to Manila. I did not know what was happening then. Except one day, we were told that we need to look for a house outside of the school campus because the Brothers' residence will be converted into a formation house for Brothers coming out of the Novitiate in Tamontaka, Cotabato City.

At that time, there were Brothers from India and Sri Lanka who had their Novitiate Formation in the Philippines. Few years after, Brothers from Pakistan, Malaysia and South Korea joined.

In 1994, after the present buildings and facilities have been completed, the Superiors from the Pacific or Oceania decided to send their young Brothers from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu. At present, MAPAC has opened its doors to other religious congregations for their formation including Sisters from Vietnam. Incidentally, a Brother from mainland China belonging to East Asia Province is an in-coming third year scholastic. In two years time, Brothers from the Mission Ad Gentes Sector will be joining MAPAC for their post novitiate formation.

To ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the programs of the Center, the MAPAC Board composed of the Superiors of the Provinces and District with the Vicar-General representing the General Administration are authorized to directly supervise and monitor the operations of the Center. Twice a year the Full Board and the Executive Board meet in Manila. During these meetings, programs are evaluated and the members of the staff and students are consulted to address immediate and long term concerns.

Bro. Wenceslao Calimpon was personally invited by Bro. Charles to come back to the Philippines after three years of missionary work in Papua New Guinea to become the first Rector of the Center. He was assisted by Bro. Alfredo Herrera from the District of Korea while Bro. Columbanus Pratt, the classmate of Bro. Charles was responsible for the building construction.

Among the Brothers who served as Rectors were: Bro. Wenceslao Calimpon, Bro. Alfredo Herrera, Bro. Carl Tapp, Bro. Paterno Corpus, Bro. Jeff Crowe, and Bro. Desmond Howard. The present

I met Bro. Charles Howard about 25 years ago, December of 1987. It was on my third year as a perpetually professed Marist Brother. We had an annual retreat/recollection with him at the Passionist Priests' place in Calumpang, General Santos City, Philippines. He called each one of the members of the FMS Philippine Province and have a one-on-one little talk. I can't forget his question to me. He said, "Do you love your vocation?" I simply said, yes, and he said, "Thank you brother, please pray for me and let us pray for one another." Leaving him at the conference room, I was wondering about the kind of question he asked me, but I was amazed of the tone of his voice and his gestures. He was so fatherly! Such an impression imprinted in my memory that I always fondly remember. I thank the Lord for Bro. Charles Howard, FMS for being a gift to the Marist world.

MR. MODESTO T. PAGCO,
COTABATO CITY, FILIPINAS

Rector is Bro. Peter Rodney.

After more than 20 years of existence, MAC or MAPAC has graduated Brothers who are now holding key positions in the different Provinces and District. For two terms, two of its graduates have served the Center as members of the Formation Staff. They are Bro. John Hazelman and Bro. Roshan Silva. To replace one of them is Bro. Simon Serero from Papua New Guinea. The current Director of Novices in the Philippines is Bro. Lindley Sionosa. Both had their formation at MAPAC.

Bro. Charles did not only leave a mark in the establishment of MAPAC. Before MAPAC existed, he traveled to China to meet with our Brothers there who remained faithful and loyal to the Congregation and the Church amidst the difficulties of isolation and the persecution under the communist regime. He even tried to recruit one candidate who went to the Novitiate but left.

Bro. Charles may be gone but his memory lives. He will be remembered forever and his legacy in the minds and hearts of people the lives he has touched can only inspire us to do our share of making a difference great or small.



5. PHOTO ALBUM

*Picture of
the Marist Family in
the General House.
Painted by Goyo.
Particular detail:
Br Charles Howard,
Br Francis and
Marcellin.*

If we wish to know something about someone's personality, we will certainly look at photos of him or talk to someone who has tried to represent him in a painting. In this area, we can say that Br Charles resembles Saint Marcellin, who never wanted a portrait made of him. Below you will find two testimonies from people who painted his portrait and the album of photos.

IT IS SAID OF CHARLES HOWARD

THE ESSENTIAL IDEA OF THE MARIST FAMILY

[...] I felt very much the death of Br Ch. Howard with whom I had the opportunity to live during my month's stay in the General House to paint the mural of the Marist Family. The initiative for painting this mural came, as so many others relating to the image of Champagnat, from Br Agustín Carazo, then Postulator General. For weeks, before going to Rome, I was making sketches without knowing exactly the real space, and then I had to reorganize my ideas and start again, although maintaining the es-

GREGORIO DOMÍNGUEZ
(Goyo), Spain

HOWARD TRIBUTE TO Br CHARLES



sentinal idea of the Marist Family in as much as Marcellin shows us the way, which is Mary, to lead us to Jesus and through Jesus to our fellow men. As the great Marist Family includes the Marist Brothers, the Marist Fathers and the Sisters, Agustín Carazo asked me to include the portrait of Brother Charles as representative of all the Brothers at that time and perhaps a little with the idea of paying a tribute to Br Charles and giving him a surprise.

I made the portrait from a photo Agustín provided and, when he considered it was finished, Br Agustín invited him to come and see it. The truth is that his reaction was not what we expected; he was not pleased to see himself in the mural, I imagined because of his spirit of humility. So what I did was to significantly mellow the tones so that his image was left blurred or suggested. I imagine that Br Agustín had to exercise his diplomatic skills so

that, finally, Br Charles would accept seeing himself daily in the mural. I remember that month with much affection and the help that the community of students lent me in installing the mural. My favourite parts of this work are: the little crystal base with the violets, the image of Mary, and the group on the right around Jesus.

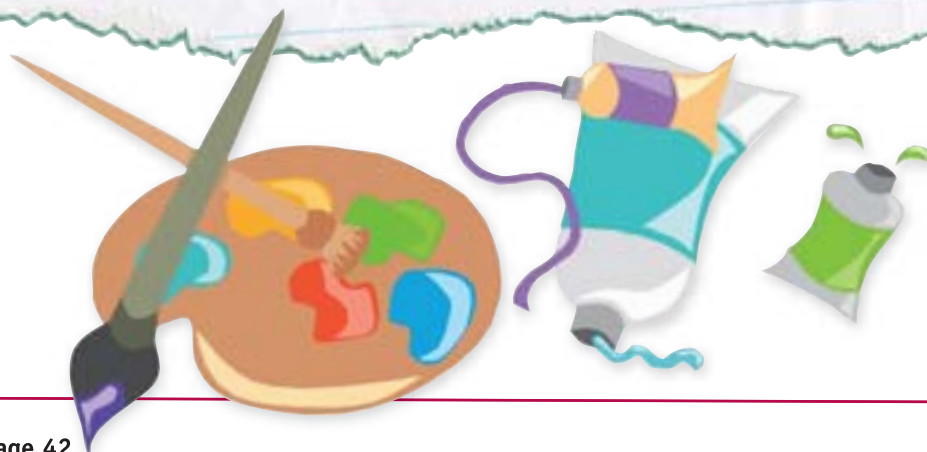
[...] The principal problem - perhaps the good fortune or the "grace" - was that Br Charles and his Councillors were not in Rome (Ferragosto) and he had never indicated clearly how he wanted this mural of the MF. It seems he desired something symbolical: a great "tree" with the 4 "branches" of the MF, since in Oceania this is a very tangible reality. But Goyo understood something else by "Marist family", around Champagnat and his work of the Brothers. [...] Goyo began by painting the 4 "nuclei" of persons: "Marcellin" who invites us to enter a family circle - with the family portraits - and to know the work of the Brothers in education, care for children and young people, around and in the style of Mary - with simplicity and love - so that these "pupils" already (trans) formed may be capable of announcing and delivering Jesus to the "needy" (who live in darkness, suffering, solitude).

[Then] now and then, Br Charles came down to look and was feeling very happy, although he came close to reprimanding me for having suggested including his portrait with that of Br François (1st SG - and actual SG).

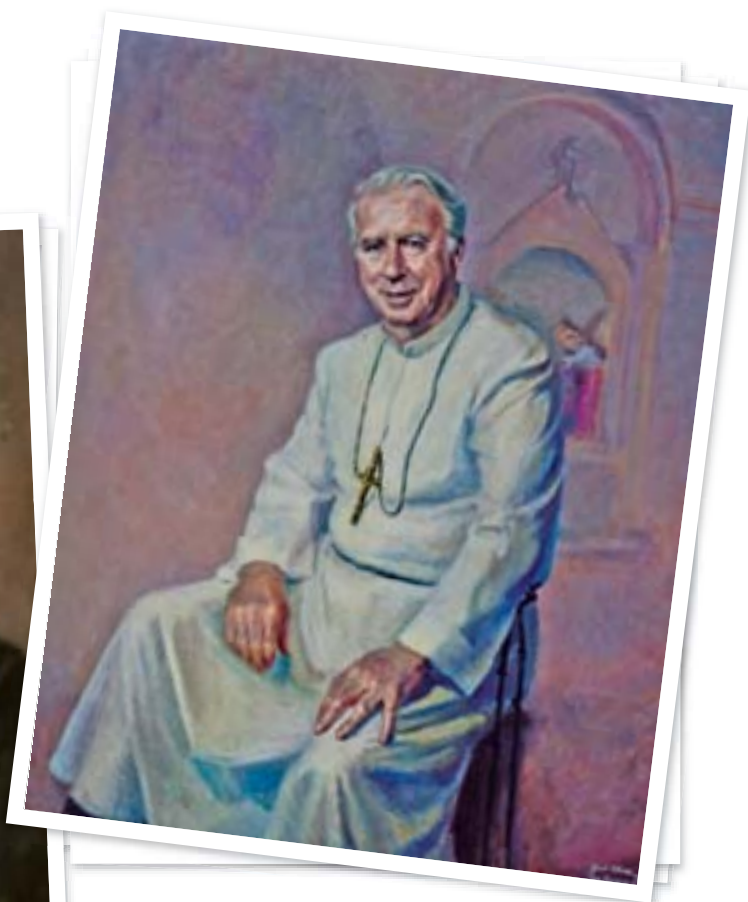
For this reason it was "toned down" and the colour muted.

[...] I believe that the great merit of Br Charles is in his having looked for and encountered substantial elements of the person and spirituality of Marcellin, which he then transmitted through his Circulars, but clearly, in that he wanted to paint "the tree of four branches", to represent the great Marist Family, I believe he was not very inspired, Goyo knew better, with his gifts of fine art and Marist heart [...]

BR AGUSTÍN CARAZO A.
COLEGIO N.S. DE ANDACOLLO, LA SERENA, CHILE



Portrait in the "Gallery of the Superiors" of the General House. Painted by Yve Close



Portrait at St Joseph's College, Australia

THE PRIVILEGE OF PAINTING BR CHARLES HOWARD

As a professional portrait painter, I was afforded the privilege of painting Brother Charles Howard – firstly a large canvas, three-quarter-figure, for St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill followed by a second smaller study for the Marist Brothers Mother House in Rome. Dr. Tony Bookallil, one of the Old Boys Of St. Joseph's, was instrumental in my being awarded the first commission. The second request emanated from Rome.

The sittings were arranged almost one year in advance, because of Brother Charles' busy schedule. During his time in Australia Brother Charles sat in my studio for six long days, with patience and cooperation. As the sittings progressed, an intangible thread grew between us which, I find,

is a very necessary element when endeavoring to paint the spirit of a person.

Some time after completion of the work, Brother Charles reluctantly agreed to attend an unveiling of the large portrait at St Joseph's College but confessed to me that he would "sooner be 50,000 miles away". Such was his humility. That unveiling provided a very special night for all who attended and happens to be the last occasion when I spent time with Brother Charles. My memories of a personal experience shared with this special man will live on.

YVE CLOSE,
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

1. BR CHARLES HOWARD WITH HIS FATHER
3. BR CHARLES HOWARD WITH BR BASILIO RUEDA, IN THE 1976 GENERAL CHAPTER
4. BR CHARLES HOWARD AT THE XIX GENERAL CHAPTER, WITH THE BR BASILIO RUEDA AND BENITO ARBUES

1



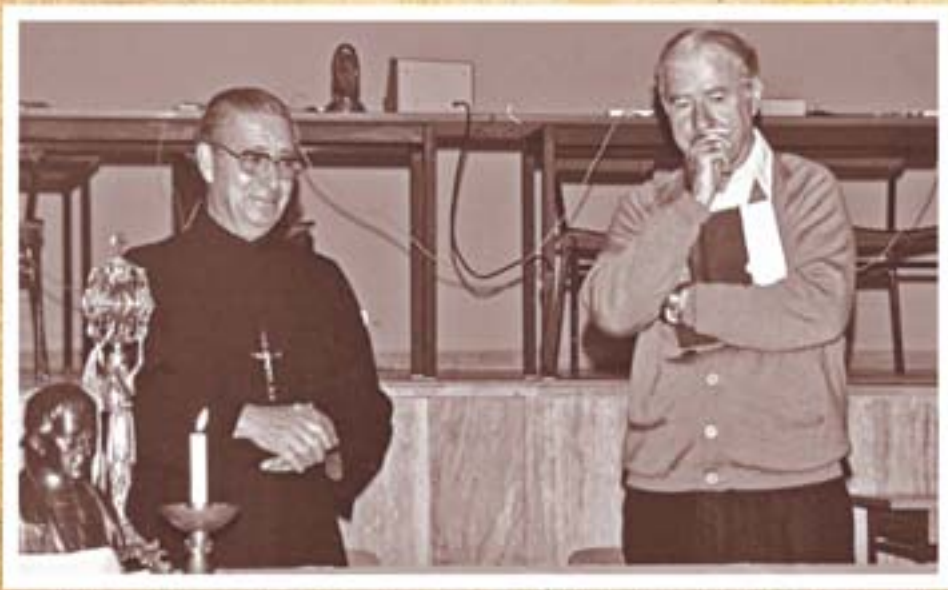
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8



6

5 AND 6. BROTHERS' XVIII GENERAL
CHAPTER, IN THE AUDIENCE
WITH POPE JOHN PAUL II.
7. BR CHARLES HOWARD
AT THE SYNOD OF 1990.
8. ONE OF THE OFFICIAL
PHOTOGRAPHS
OF BR CHARLES HOWARD
AS SUPERIOR GENERAL

1



3



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4



5



1, 2, 3 AND 4. PACIFIC ISLANDS
5. BR CHARLES HOWARD
WITH THE CARDINAL
OF MOZAMBIQUE
6. IN FIJI. YAGONA
WELCOMING CEREMONY



6

1



2



3



1. VISIT TO PAPUA
2, 3 AND 4. BROTHER
CHARLES
HOWARD VISITS
BRAZIL
5. BR CHARLES
HOWARD VISITS
ARGENTINA

4



5



1



1, 2, 3, 4 AND 5.
BR CHARLES
WITH BROTHERS
IN CHINA

6. NSAMOA

7. WFIJ



2



3

4



5



6



7

1 AND 2. BR CHARLES HOWARD
AND HIS FAMILY

3. BR CHARLES HOWARD,
MARCH 2007

4. BR CHARLES HOWARD
WITH ONE OF HER NIECES



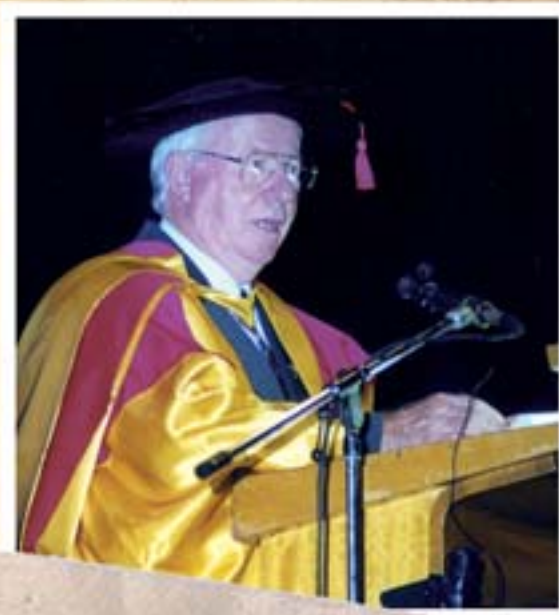
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5. BR CHARLES HOWARD
BR KEVIN WILLITS, 2010
6 AND 7. RECEIVING AN HONORARY
DOCTORATE
FROM AUSTRALIAN
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY, 2000

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2



1, 2 AND 3. FUNERAL
OF BROTHER
CHARLES
HOWARD.
JANUARY 20,
2012.
SEQUENCE
4. BREMLITURJ

3



4





1



2

1. BR JEFF
CROWE,
PROVINCIAL
OF SYDNEY
2 AND 3. PHILIP E.
WILLSON,
ARCHBISHOP
OF ADELAIDE.
EX-STUDENT
OF
BR CHARLES
HOWARD

3



[...] We have been blessed by the years
that you have been among us; we are far richer
because of your presence, wiser because of your insights,
more aware of our responsibilities
because of the way in which you have lived your life.
Continue to pray for us, as you always have,
and never cease to be among us in new ways:
challenging us to be the best that we can be:
generous and loving men and women in love with God
and on fire with the Good News of Jesus Christ.
And for those of us who are your brothers,
assist us in making our own the dream
of this simple country priest and Marist Father
who is our founder: to do ordinary things
exceptionally well and to love with an extraordinary love.
Yes, continue to show us what it means
to be Champagnats for today: men of faith,
with hearts for the poor,
ever eager to evangelize young people.

Br SEÁN D. SAMMON

