CLM
9º ENCUENTRO INTERNACIONAL
BOGOTÁ - COLOMBIA

LLAMADOS POR JESÚS EN ALIANZA CON MARÍA
CALLED BY JESUS, IN ALLIANCE WITH MARY
APPELÉ PAR JESUS, EN ALLIANCE AVEC MARIE

October 12, 2026
Our Lady of the Pillar

To our Marianist Family:

On behalf of the International Team and the delegates of the 9th International Assembly of the Marianist Lay Communities, I am happy to share the attached summary of the assembly.

The week was a beautiful expression of family, and the movement of the Holy Spirit, as we gathered in mission, “Called by Jesus, in Alliance with Mary”.

The first two pages highlight the week. They are followed by appendices which provide more details about our 2025 member survey, updates to our statutes, and an outline of our first Organization and Management Manual. The statutes must be approved by the Vatican. Once they are approved, both documents will be made available.

We also elected officers to serve on the 2026-2030 International Team.

Finally, mentioned briefly at the end of the summary, the priorities for the International Team, and thus the MLC worldwide, include outreach to and participation of young adults, communication and transparency, authentic collaboration, a framework for formation, spiritual development and accompaniment. These will be further developed by the International Team and we will welcome the input and participation of our members.

We ask for your prayers as we begin these next four years.

United in Mission,

Matt Dunn

Matt Dunn
President

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Summary of the 9th International Meeting of Marianist Lay Communities

From August 17–22, 2026, members of Marianist Lay Communities from around the world gathered in Bogotá, Colombia, for the 9th International Meeting of the CLM. Six days of prayer, reflection, dialogue, fellowship, and discernment provided an opportunity to celebrate the richness of the international Marianist Lay Community while also looking toward its future.

The assembly heard and discussed the results of the 2025 **MLC member survey**. It was divided into several sections: personal Marianist experience, community life, regional/national life, youth involvement, and broader Marianist Family. A sample of the survey results is in **Appendix I**. Complete and individual National results are available to National Responsibles for further analysis and reflection. The survey was administered in nine languages and was completed by 986 individuals from around the world. More women than men completed the survey. Chile was the country with the highest response rate.

The assembly also approved updates (Appendix II) to the **Statutes** of the International Organization of Marianist Lay Communities as well as its inaugural **Organization and Management Manual** (Appendix III).

A central theme throughout the gathering was **vocation**—the call to live the Marianist charism in the circumstances of our lives and in response to the needs of the world. Participants reflected on vocation not as something static, but as a call that is continually discerned and develops over time. God's call can be heard through our gifts, our communities, the world around us, the movement of the Spirit, and the Church. The gathering emphasized the importance of listening both individually and communally as we seek to understand where God is calling us next.

That sense of call is inseparable from **community**. Participants reflected on the ways shared prayer, mutual support, the sharing of gifts, and even fraternal correction help communities become places where faith is lived rather than simply discussed. At the same time, the gathering acknowledged real challenges. In some parts of the world, communities face aging membership and the need for greater outreach and accompaniment to attract new and younger members. In others, particularly Africa, young and growing communities bring tremendous faith and hope while confronting challenges such as distance and resources. Other lay communities are faced by the reality that Marianist religious are no longer present in their countries. Across these different realities was a common desire to build the communities God dreams of—communities rooted in faith while open to renewal and change.

The international nature of the meeting offered a powerful reminder that the Marianist Family can look very different from one country or culture to another while remaining united by a common charism.

Participants heard about the statistics and experiences of Marianist Lay Communities in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The diversity of languages, cultures, experiences, and circumstances did not diminish the sense of family; rather, it demonstrated the many ways the same Marianist vocation can take root around the world.

Participants also experienced community beyond the meeting room. An excursion to Zipaquirá and its **Salt Cathedral** offered time for contemplation, conversation, and rest. The Stations of the Cross and the cathedral's central nave brought together faith, art, and history, while a shared meal and time exploring the city provided opportunities for relationships to deepen across countries and regions.

The gathering also placed a strong emphasis on **mission**. Visits to Marianist ministries in Bogotá—including Madre Adela School and the parishes of Blessed Chaminade and Our Lady of Charity—offered concrete examples of a Marianist presence close to the people and responsive to their needs. The hospitality, celebrations, and shared meals experienced during these visits reinforced an important insight: despite differences in geography and circumstance, mission provides a common thread that connects the Marianist Family.

The meeting was also a time to consider the **future of Marianist Lay Communities and the broader Marianist Family**. In addition to discussion about governance, including the Statutes update and approval of the Manual of Organization and Management, superiors of the branches of the Marianist Family shared what is working, what could be improved, and their hopes for the future.

The new **International Team** was also elected:

- Matt Dunn (USA) - President
- Jose Julian Matos-Auffant (USA) - North America, Ireland, Australia
- Lilliam Valle de Garagorri (Peru) - Latin America
- Mercedes “Leles” Quero Molina (Spain)- Europe
- Kiyoshi Hirata (Japan) - Asia
- Elvis Omondi Oweya (Kenya) - Africa

The Assembly expressed its gratitude to outgoing leadership team members for their service: Boris Giambanco (President), Mercedes de la Cuadra (Europe), Narcisse Atse (Africa).

The gathering can best be summarized by one of the reflections from the week: **“The Charism Is Life.”** Mission, faith, Mary, and community are not simply characteristics to preserve from the Marianist tradition. They are a living gift that each generation is called to receive, renew, and embody in its own time.

The Bogotá gathering demonstrated both the remarkable diversity and the deep unity of Marianist Lay Communities around the world. Participants returned home challenged to continue listening for God’s call, strengthening community, responding to the needs around them, and finding new ways to make the Marianist charism a living reality today.

Priorities that emerged during the Assembly include outreach to and participation of young adults, communication and transparency, authentic collaboration, a framework for formation, spiritual development and accompaniment.

Appendix I

Summary of Responses to IO-MLC Member Survey Administered in 2025

Personal Marianist Experience

- The majority of Members learned about MLCs from a vowed religious or through a Marianist ministry (schools or parish). In Latin America, invitation comes from MLC members.
- Members say MLCs have a positive impact on their life and that they grow closer to Jesus because of the MLC.
- 86% of members pray daily
- Approximately half have a spiritual companion. Similarly, only half have a written Life Plan.
- The majority find spiritual development and formation mostly in community versus through personal pursuit.
- Members are engaged in social ministries on a personal basis, versus via a community ministry.
- 81% of members contribute financially to the MLC

Experience in an MLC

- 76% of members consider their community attendance good or very good.
- 88% prioritize community gatherings
- The majority of communities have 6-10 members, followed by communities with 11-15 members.
- The majority of communities meet twice a month, followed by those that meet monthly.
- The majority of MLC members are over the age of 50.
- 64% of communities have welcomed new members. But as an average, there is no overall net gain of members because people leave the community or communities cease to exist.
- 76% of communities have an advisor
- Formation, prayer, celebration of sacraments and fellowship are the most common community activities

Experience of the Regional and National Context

- 68% of members say they participate in regional or national gatherings. 4% say such gatherings don't exist.
- 81% say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the opportunities to gather.
- 55% say gatherings are held more than once a year while 30% said once a year
- The primary reasons for gathering are to celebrate important Marianist days, followed by formation opportunities, prayer, and retreats.
- 68% consider that MLCs are not well known. There is widespread perception of invisibility and there is a challenge to boost public outreach.
- Members are generally unaware of MLCs in other parts of their country as well as the overall number of Lay Marianists in their country.
- The largest growth of young adult communities is in Africa.

- Parishes and schools are the primary way people find out about MLCs.
- Annual public celebrations of Lay Marianist Commitments generally do not exist.
- Community, Prayer, a Faith that enlivens your life, and Mary are highly valued
- Development of a life project and personal accompaniment are opportunities to strengthen ones vocation and missionary commitment

Young Adults

- 43% believe young people need more formation to strengthen commitment. There is also a desire for greater inclusion in community decisions and spaces for dialog and listening.
- Integration of young adults into the broader Marianist Family is only rated as Fair. There were as many Poor responses as there were Very Good responses.
- Activities proposed to increase young people's participation include:
    - Activities and gatherings such as retreats, fellowship days, camps, etc.
    - Intentional efforts to increase a sense of welcome and belonging
    - Formation and accompaniment as well as opportunities for prayer
    - Inviting young adults to leadership roles

The Marianist Family

- While members may know there are other branches in their country, they are less familiar with any data about them.
- There is less familiarity with the existence of local family council, particularly if there is only one branch in a particular geographic area.
- 83% of laity say they are valued equally by the other branches. However, only 78% consider there is synodal relationship among the branches. Collaboration is perceived as positive but there is a sense of inequity which vowed religious don't perceive or are unaware of.
- To improve synodality, members desire more joint activities, followed by greater communication and transparency.

Expectations from Leadership

- Members desire greater communication and transparency.
- Members are seeking formation and desire more resources, particularly in French.
- Members would like support for local projects.
- Members desire opportunities to collaborate with other communities
- Members seek facilitation of gatherings and retreats, offering advice and accompaniment

Appendix II
Updates to Statutes

Update Presented to the General Assembly

- Clarifies the role of the International Team and establishes a Presidency Team consisting of Secretary, Treasurer, Spiritual Advisor, and Counselors
- Articulates responsibilities of Regional and National leaders
- Clarifies the members of the International Team may only serve two consecutive four year terms for a total of eight years.
- Aligns language to current realities such as updating the name of the Pontifical Council for the Laity to be Dicastery for the Laity, the Family, and Life.
- Withdraws, at the Dicastery's request, a proposal for electronic voting.
- Establishes a new article concerning the protection of the person, especially minors and vulnerable adults. The article establishes a commitment to create safe environments and gives the President authority to create an autonomous commission to evaluate claims of abuse.
- Identifies Spanish as the language of interpretation of the Statutes
- Identifies Via Latina 22, Rome, Italy as the official address of the IO-MLC.

The Assembly approved the Statutes as presented as well as proposed modifications:

- Removing specific redundancies (approved)
- Explicitly stating that the National Responsible or their delegate is to be a member of their National Family Council (approved)
- Added a sentence stating MLC's may take up common projects with the Marianist Family and with other Marianist institutions (approved)
- Confirmed December 8 as our foundation date (already in Statute, affirmed)
- Confirmed MLC's are open to all Christians vs. only Catholics (already in Statute, affirmed)

The assembly did not approve proposals to allow regional responsibles to be elected outside the general assembly. The assembly did not approve expanding the International Team's terms to two five year terms.

The Statutes must be presented to and approved by the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life before they can be distributed.

Appendix III
Organization and Management Manual

The Organization and Management Manual was created by the 2022-2026 Leadership Team to put into one place key statements from our founding documents; policies governing the responsibilities and practices of the International Team as well as National and Regional leaders; and procedures governing the Association (such as elections and finances). Direct quotes from Association documents are cited as such. Below is a description of each section of the Manual:

1. **Being a Lay Marianist** - cites our founding documents as well as sources quoting Fr. Chaminade
2. **The Marianist Lay Communities** - cites our founding documents
3. **The International Team** - cites founding documents, statutes, and reflects current practices. It includes the creation of Presidential and Regional teams.
4. **Regional Meetings** - reflects current and desired practices, and cites founding documents, statutes, and current practices. The International Meeting (General Assembly) is included in this section. A noteworthy item is that the 2026 General Assembly approved the addition of explicit instructions concerning the identification and nomination of delegates to the Assembly, candidates for election, and the process for proxy voting on behalf of delegates who are unable to attend.
5. **Function of Authority** - Process for recognizing a Marianist Lay Community
6. **Finance** - includes general principles concerning austerity and other practices, international and regional budgets and accounting, recommendation concerning the establishment of regional civil entities, where possible, in order to conduct business.
7. **Communication** - consists of policies concerning the use of images and content in various communications, including social media
8. **World Council of the Marianist Famil**y - identifies the purpose of the Council, our relationship to the other branches, and the administration of the business of the Council (convenings, finances, common projects, etc.)