

**CIRCULAR LETTER OF THE GENERAL SUPERIOR
TO ALL OF THE MAJOR SUPERIORS AND ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION
CONVENING THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 2017**

Prot. n. 92/2016

"Consider your own calling brothers" (1 Cor 1:26)

In light of art. 231 of our Directory, according to which the General Chapter must be convened by a circular letter no later than six months in advance, after consultation with the Provincial and Vicariate Superiors gathered in a meeting in Rome on Feb. 23-26, 2016, and having obtained the approval of the General Council in its session on Feb. 27, 2016, (K 238), I hereby convoke the General Chapter on **Feb. 5, 2017, at 8:00 pm, in Rome**. The Chapter will start with a Day of Recollection (D 237). The Chapter members will have come to Rome in advance, i.e., on Feb. 4-5, 2017, to participate from the very beginning on the Day of Recollection. The closing of the Chapter is scheduled for Feb. 25, 2017.

In accordance with C 239, the following participate in the General Chapter ex officio: the Superior General, the General Councilors, the Secretary General, the General Treasurer, the Provincial and Vicariate Superiors who are presently in office and the former General Superiors; as well as the delegates from the Provinces, the General Vicariates, and the houses under the direct jurisdiction of the Superior General, elected in accordance with the law.

Each Province should hold well in advance of the Chapter General the first session of their Provincial Chapter, having previously notified the Superior General (C 250 and C 251). The second session of the same Provincial Chapter is to be held no later than three months after the closing of the General Chapter (C 251). Provincial Chapters must be carried out in accordance with the directives prescribed in our laws C 250-253 and D 252-254. Delegates to the General Chapter and their substitutes are to be chosen during the first session of the Provincial and the General Vicariates' Chapters (C 239, D 234).

The General Vicariates' chapters shall be held in order to elect one delegate to the General Chapter and his substitute (D 234), with the participation of only the perpetually professed members who, according to our law, have an active and passive voice in elections (C 231). The General Vicariated Superior chooses the time and place of the chapter, after obtaining the consent of his council and informing the Superior General. At the appropriate time, instructions for holding chapters in General Vicariates shall be sent to the Vicariates Superiors along with attached ballots for electing the delegates to the General Chapter.

Copies of the minutes and documents of the Provincial and General Vicariates' chapters must be sent to the Superior General and his council for review and approval as soon as possible (D 254).

Provincial and General Vicariates' chapters should discuss and prepare proposals for the General Chapter (D 253.7). I also remind you that every house and every confrere may submit their suggestions to the General Chapter, either personally or through delegates (C 243). Each suggestion is to be duly motivated and defined - whether it is a proposed amendment to the Constitution or the Directory, a decree, recommendation, or a declaration, explanation, or appeal.

According to art. 230 of our Directory, the General Government shall send to the Provinces and General Vicariates an anticipated program of the General Chapter no later than three months prior to its opening.

I wish to remind the Provincial and General Vicariates Superiors their obligation to prepare for the General Chapter a report on the state of the personnel and the discipline of members, on the material and financial situation, and the scope of the apostolic works in their Province/General Vicariate (C 241). So that the General Chapter may best discern the situation of the Congregation, please indicate the positive aspects of the management of the entrusted communities and the challenges they face, as well as possible development prospects for the Congregation and its works. I suggest that each Province Superior present a 45-minute max report, while the Vicariate Superior's report should be no more than 20 minutes. Please send your Provincial and Vicariate Superiors' reports to the secretariat of the General Curia in three languages, that it is, in Polish, English, and Portuguese, no later than Dec. 31, 2016, by post and electronic mail (secret@marians.it).

The General Chapter is a momentous event in the life of our Congregation. Its aim is to preserve the patrimony of our religious community, contribute to its sustainable development and health according to our own charism and mission adapted to the needs of the time; to deal with important matters; to issue

appropriate decrees and elect the new General Government (C 237).

In addition to its usual tasks described in our Laws, the upcoming General Chapter will work on possible amendments to the current Constitutions and Directory. The last General Chapter, celebrated in Rome from Feb. 4-19, 2011, stipulated in its Decree No. 3 that "With the consent of his Council, in the first year of his term of office, the Superior General shall establish a Committee on the Constitutions and Directory, the goal of which shall be to review and ratify possible changes as well as to edit the standing Constitutions and Directory of the Marian Fathers. The Commission shall present the results of its work during the next General Chapter." That Commission was established on Feb. 13, 2012, (Prot. N. 18/2012), and it held 6 working meetings. Its last meeting is planned for in the autumn, from Sept. 20-24, 2016, at which time we hope to prepare the final version of the amendments, which, according to the decree of the Chapter, will be presented during the General Chapter. Since the decree strictly determines to whom and when the results of this Commission's work are to be presented, I cannot reveal them in advance to the entire Congregation, or even to the Province or Vicariates' chapters, nor to the participants of the General Chapter, before its official start. I hope that the long-awaited canonization of our Father Founder, Bl. Stanislaus Papczyński will not only positively impact the deliberations of the next General Chapter, but also help its members in their common discernment of such statutory provisions that would best and more adequately express the charism of our religious community. Due to the significance of these issues, endorsed by the last General Chapter, after consulting the Provinces and Vicariates Superiors and obtaining the General Council's consent, I decided to propose a three-week duration for the next Chapter (one week more than usual).

We know that the fruitfulness of the General Chapter depends, above all, on the light from the Holy Spirit and the openness of the minds and hearts of the Chapter members and their docility to His inspirations. Therefore, I urge all the confreres to pray for it constantly and fervently. Furthermore, I particularly **ask and obligate all confreres and every community to recite daily, starting on Aug. 15, 2016, the prayer for our Congregation according to the words of Bl. George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, and then, starting on Jan. 27, 2017 (the feast of Bl. George), to recite the Novena through the intercession of Bl. Father Stanislaus as part or instead of the Marian prayers.** I also encourage everyone to support the work of the General Chapter, by offering for this intention Holy Masses, prayers, sufferings and good deeds.

Invoking the intercession of Mary Immaculate, as well as our Founder, Blessed Stanislaus, our Renovator, Blessed George, the Blessed Martyrs, George and Anthony and all of the patrons of the Congregation, let us ask our Merciful God for an abundance of fruits from the Chapter.

Rome, May 3, 2016.

Fr. Andrzej Pakuła, MIC
Superior General

Fr. Zbigniew Piłat, MIC
Secretary General