



Congregazione dei Missionari di N.S. de La Salette
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177th Anniversary of the Apparition
September 19, 2023

“...We resolve in the light of the Apparition of Our Lady of La Salette, to be devoted servants of Christ and of the Church for the fulfilment of the mystery of Reconciliation”.

(Rule of Life # 4)

Dear Brothers,

The celebration of the anniversary of the Apparition offers us every year the possibility of returning to the roots and profound reasons of our La Salette religious and priestly vocation, understood above all as a personal and community response to God's call and then as a testimony of life and service to Church and the world we live in. To our young people in formation, to those engaged in pastoral care, to the elderly and to our sick, my personal greetings and best wishes and those of the General Administration for this auspicious event that never ceases to accompany us and give meaning always new to the history and personal life of each of us as Missionaries of the Weeping Virgin of La Salette.

1. On the way to the General Chapter 2024

In a few months, in the spring of 2024, as you well know, the 33rd General Chapter will take place whose main task is to elect a new Administration for the animation of our Congregation for the next six years and also ***“to examine the spiritual and temporal condition of the Congregation; to give the opportunity for the Congregation as a whole periodically to take account of itself and its mission, to adapt itself to the times in order better to answer to the needs of the world, to assure that it will make the best use of the means at its disposal and to affirm its unity”*** (Rule of Life # 195 C). It is such an important responsibility for all of us that we must not allow ourselves to let it go unnoticed and, without it affecting in one way or another the quality of our religious and charismatic life as well as our pastoral life at the service of the people of God .

We are all invited to prepare ourselves to experience this gracious event first of all with personal and community prayer so that our hearts may open to welcome with gratitude and renewed enthusiasm the stimuli that the Holy Spirit will offer to broaden our pastoral horizons and courageously face the challenges spiritual and missionary who will undoubtedly mark the path of our Congregation in the near future.

For this to materialize, the participation of each and every one is not only warmly desired but indispensable, precious and necessary. To this end, the Preparatory Commission of the Chapter has elaborated a "working tool" sent to all the Provinces a few months ago to allow each individual religious to give his contribution with suggestions and proposals, to the life and growth human, spiritual, charismatic and missionary of our Congregation. I hope that everyone's collaboration will not fail, on the contrary, it will be massive, fruitful and promoter of new spiritual and pastoral paths to be undertaken together.

I invite everyone to experience this personal and community involvement as a path of conversion and renewal at all levels and responsibly made their own and shared with the confreres. In fact we are all called to deal regularly and over time with the Word of God, as indispensable daily spiritual nourishment and with the person and work of Jesus Christ so that our life is increasingly configured to him.

I also invite everyone to recite the prayer for the Chapter every day, individually or in community or with the Laity of Salette and the faithful of our parishes, to ask God for the gift of his Spirit and the Beautiful Lady of La Salette for her maternal protection on the work of the next chapter meeting. It affects the present and the future of each of us and of our large La Salette Family.

2. Our Missionary Life

I wish to thank God and Our Lady of La Salette for the work that is being done throughout our Congregation and especially in our missions:

- From the month of September in Tanzania we will have two formation houses: the "**Saint Joseph Formation House**" in Kagemu on the outskirts of Bukoba, with 3 students, directed by Fr. Aldrin H. Cenizal MS, who will begin their Philosophy courses at the Ntungamo Inter-Regional seminary a few kilometers away from our residence; and the "**Blessed Carlo Acutis Formation House**" in Nyakigando (located about twenty minutes from Rutete) with 4 young aspirants in Vocational Search (Come and see program) under the guidance of Fr. Sajith.
- Fr. Edegard Silva Junior MS, who has been working as a missionary in the diocese of Pemba (Mozambique) since 2018, has requested and obtained permission to return to Brazil, his country of origin, at the beginning of next year, for family reasons. The gap left by his departure will be filled by the arrival, in the coming months, of Fr. Zacarias Mango MS, a member of the Province of Angola, who said he was enthusiastic and available to work in our mission in Mozambican land.
- On 29th of October, in Haiti, the first La Salette religious profession of the young novices from the country will take place. It is an event of particular importance both for the two Provinces involved in the mission (Madagascar and the USA) as well as for the rest of the Congregation for which we must thank the Lord and the Virgin of La Salette. We hope and pray that the La Salette presence will take root more and more in the religious and social fabric of the Caribbean country in the light of our charism.
- In the name of the Congregation, I thank Frs. Joby Mutthatil MS (India) and Zacarias Mango MS (Angola) for their generous willingness to work in our Missions in Rutete/Tanzania respectively starting this month of September and in Pemba/Mozambique in a few months. May the Lord of the harvest bless and make their ministry fruitful.
- I also thank Fr. Antoni Skatba MS (Poland), former Rector of the Shrine/France for having welcomed and accepted the invitation to go to the District of Argentina/Bolivia to share the journey of religious and community life with the confreres present there as well as the joys, worries and challenges of the ministry entrusted to them by the local churches. His mission began on last September 1st.

3. Final Greetings

We welcome and live this annual celebration as a very special gift for our religious family which prompts us to re-read our identity in the light of our charism to better serve the cause of the Gospel and the mission of the Church. We are not alone in doing this because with us there are also the La Salette sisters, animated by the same charism and the La Salette Laity, present in all the Provinces, as well as the numerous friends and benefactors of our communities and the many devotees of the Beautiful Lady who assiduously assist the parishes entrusted to the pastoral care of our Congregation.

May the weeping Virgin of La Salette help us grow as a community of faith ever dedicated to the ministry of reconciliation, in the light of her message which speaks of conversion, mercy and hope.

Happy and Holy Anniversary of the Apparition to all with God's blessing and the protection of the Beautiful Lady, our mother and patroness.

Yours fraternally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Silvano Marisa". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Fr. Silvano Marisa MS,
Superior General