



## Missionary Fraternity of Mary Newsletter Spring 2017



### **INTRODUCING THE NEW GENERAL COUNCIL**

Every six years Fraternity priests representing FMM missions around the world gather in Guatemala for two weeks of prayer and discernment, ending with the election of the General Council which will lead the Fraternity over the next six years.

The Eighth General Chapter meeting was held at the seminary complex in Guatemala City during the period of September 12th to the 30th, 2016. This meeting provides Fraternity priests an opportunity to discern the origins of the society (i.e. where it came from) and plan for its future (i.e. where it is going), all the while remaining faithful to their founding constitution and echoing directly out of Christ's challenge – "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

The General Chapter is a time of grace rooted in the Spirituality of Exodus thus giving credence to our founding principles – a missionary vocation which lives a fraternal life in community, serving the neediest, and going where sent. The outcome of the meeting results in a resolution which reaffirms the society's commitment to its beloved brothers in the ministry, solidarity particularly in missions wherein injustice, hunger, persecution, sickness and exhaustion is experienced along with cultural indifference.

The bulk of the General Chapter meeting concentrates on review of and refinement of its founding principles. After long days of discussion, discernment, and reaffirmation of our founding principles, the members then proceed to elect new leadership for the next six years.



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The balance of this newsletter is therefore dedicated to presenting the General Council which will guide the Missionary Fraternity of Mary during the period of October 2016 through September 2022.



### **GENERAL MODERATOR – REV. EDER ERWIN ESCOBAR**

From San Marcos in Guatemala, Father Eder entered the seminary at age 22. While observing other foreign missionary priests working in Guatemala he began to question “why couldn’t I become like them?” He became involved in the youth ministry movement in his parish, an entity which eventually became the Missionary Fraternity of Mary. Soon he became convinced that God had called him to become a missionary priest as part of that new society which was founded in 1985.

Father Eder received his degrees in philosophy and theology at the Fraternity’s seminary in Guatemala and subsequently received a degree in Spirituality at the Pontifical Institute of the Carmelite Fathers in Rome. He was ordained on September 29, 1990 and served in ministry in various parishes in Italy while working on his advanced degree in Spirituality.

In 2004 he was elected General Moderator of the Fraternity and served in this position until 2010 wherein he returned to Italy to serve as pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish and as mentor to young Fraternity priests studying in Rome.



## Missionary Fraternity of Mary Newsletter Spring 2017

In September 2016 he was re-elected as Moderator General and will be guiding the Fraternity in his second term in this position. His greatest desire and prayer is that the young men in formation at the Fraternity love and identify with the spirituality of the Fraternity and in its missions around the world.



### **VICAR GENERAL - REV. LUIS CARLOS DELEON**

Fr. Luis Carlos comes from Mazatenango in southern Guatemala. Entering the seminary at age 18 he chose to become a missionary priest because he understood that God had a goal for him to serve those most in need. He was also strongly influenced by his pastor whom he felt gave a strong testimony to the ministry.

Ordained on September 29, 1990 after receiving his formation at Pope Paul VI Institute at the Missionary Fraternity of Mary seminary he ministered for 4 years in the Diocese of Wilmington (Delaware) among migrant workers. After returning to Guatemala for a brief period in 1996, he was assigned to work at the Fraternity's mission in the Diocese of La Spezia in Italy until 2011.

At the VII General Chapter meeting he was elected as Prefect of Formation and served on the General Council until September 2016. At the VIII General Chapter meeting he was elected as Vicar General of the Society, a position which he will hold until 2022.



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He would like to dedicate his future time to strengthening the formation program at the seminary to improve the spirituality of the young men in formation.



### **PREFECT OF FORMATION – REV. ENMER OVALLE PACHECO (RIGHT)**

Fr. Enmer Ovalle is from Acatenango in Guatemala and entered the seminary at age 18. He decided to become a missionary priest because he started to see the great needs of the church. The youth group at his parish had a great missionary spirit and another priest in his parish encouraged him to discern his vocation.

He began his formation at the diocesan seminary of San Jose in Sololá and completed his studies in philosophy and theology at the Pope Paul VI institute at the Missionary Fraternity of Mary. Ordained to the priesthood in Venezuela on April 4, 1996 he returned to Guatemala to work in formation until 1997 and afterwards was sent to serve at the Fraternity's mission in Venezuela.

In 2004 he was appointed as the Delegate Head of the Venezuelan mission, a position he held until September 2016 when he was elected to the General Council.



## Missionary Fraternity of Mary Newsletter Spring 2017

His strongest desire is to increase member commitment to the Fraternity, strengthen fraternal life of its members, and to work towards increasing vocations to the priesthood. Having recently served in Venezuela during a period of great turmoil, he is committed to encouraging obedience and responsibility for all missionaries to go where they are sent.



### **PREFECT OF FINANCE – REV. SILVANO OTTO VELASQUEZ**

Born in San Marcos, Guatemala near the border with Mexico, Father Silvano entered the seminary at age 18. He was ordained a priest on February 3, 1995 and spent the next 5 years working in formation at the seminary in Guatemala City. In 1997 and for the next 2-1/2 years he was sent to study dogmatic theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. During his studies he served as pastor in one of the parishes supported by the Monte Cassino Abbey. Upon completion of his studies he returned to Guatemala to continue working in formation at the seminary for the next 7 years.

Most recently he served as pastor at St. Raphael Parish on the outskirts of Guatemala for 10 years in a crime ridden area in which his parishioners experienced much suffering and violence. In September of 2016 he was elected to the General Council of the Fraternity. His goal is to help all new members of the Fraternity to identify with its spirit of fraternal life and to work towards the future welfare of the society.



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### Summary

Please pray for the new council members that they may remain faithful to the call of the Lord and the founding principles of the Missionary Fraternity of Mary. Be assured that they will always give you what they have, their prayers and full commitment to advance the gospel message and spread the Catholic faith throughout the world.

**All contributions are tax deductible and are used exclusively for the work of the Fraternity in Guatemala and its missions worldwide.**

**For more information or to mail contributions, please send to:**

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