

FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

March 19, 2019
Solemnity of St. Joseph

Very dear brothers and sisters,

Enclosed please find the annual letter from our international director, Fr. Laurent Larroque. He invites us to read and meditate on it well. I have been very touched by it and can concur with his deep insights. I seek to unite myself and my prayers with him and his prayers, and invite and encourage you to do the same. Let us remember to include a Hail Mary in our cenacles for him. If you wish to have more copies of this annual MMP newsletter to share with others, please email or call the office. Thank you.

I. My Introduction

I am Fr. Richard Cortese, a priest of the Diocese of Memphis in Tennessee. I was ordained on May 15, 1982, in the middle of Our Lady's month. This last October 6, 2018, I drove to Potosi, Missouri with another priest serving in Memphis to attend a cenacle at St. James Church where Fr. Laurent Larroque, our international MMP director and successor to Fr. Gobbi, was conducting a cenacle. I had first met Fr. Larroque when he came to Memphis on January 28, 2017 to conduct a cenacle in our Cathedral at which 700 people participated (two-thirds of them Spanish-speaking).

In Potosi, I had the opportunity to tell Fr. Larroque that I would be interested in being the MMP regional director for the Mid-South, since over the years things had gone well in Memphis and West Tennessee, and I felt I could expand a bit. To make a long story short, he told me that Fr. Becker had stepped down as the

National Director for personal reasons. This surprised and saddened me. Then later, he completely shocked me by telling me that he needed “someone like you” to be the new National Director. I struggled with this – the great responsibility and the commitments of it – but interiorly, I felt that it was Our Lady who was speaking to me and asking this of me through this request of the international director, and I knew that I wanted to say ‘yes’ to Her. My bishop gave his approval and so here I am writing my first letter to you. I never imagined I would have this position and responsibility.

At this time, I want to take the opportunity to thank Fr. Larroque for his second visit to our country last October 2018, and also to recognize and extend a word of thanks to all of the organizers who helped to coordinate the cenacles in the sixteen cities he visited. I would like to hear from any of you who would be interested in organizing a regional cenacle when Fr. Larroque returns to the United States in 2020 or 2021.

II. My first encounter with Fr. Gobbi and the MMP

In the spring of 1978, while a senior at the St. Meinrad College Seminary, two seminarian friends had invited me to go meet a “Father Gobbi” at a cenacle in the Cathedral in Louisville, Kentucky. I had never heard of him, but since I was free that afternoon, I told them that I would go. When I saw him, he impressed me as a short, slightly “roly-poly” Italian priest wearing his black cassock, praying the rosary and sharing his words with us through a translator. However, what impressed me most was when I later began to read the blue book of Our Lady’s messages. At that time, it was only a quarter inch thick. Not everyone is affected the same way, but my heart was burning within me as I read and meditated on them.

III. The Blue Book, a Truly Great Gift

The blue book of 604 messages I think is an unspeakably wonderful gift and treasure which Our Lady has given to you and me, and to the whole Church. Amazingly, it has more than twenty imprimaturs given it over the years by Bishops and Cardinals. How blessed we are to be the children and recipients of this treasure and of the wonderful love of Our Lady which is contained in them. It is important that we read and meditate upon them! They are so simple, direct and grace-filled. They have urgency and beckon us to trust in her and to join her in her plan for peace and salvation. I have experienced that, especially in the cenacles, she forms us according to her own mind and heart in these most difficult times in which we are living.

IV. The Cenacles

Let us remember that to pray the rosary in the form of a cenacle is Our Lady's own request to us in order to bring about a new Pentecost for the Church and the world. In her messages to Fr. Gobbi, Our Lady tells us that in the cenacle of her Immaculate Heart, and consequently in the cenacles where we are gathering in prayer, we can obtain from her a new effusion of the Holy Spirit for the Church and the world. (cf. 284p) What a great gift, and how much we need it! For me, this is the main focus – to come together to pray with Mary for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and also to especially pray for the Holy Father, Pope Francis, who is the foundation of the Church's unity, not forgetting our bishops and priests who especially need our prayers in these times. Let us not forget that our consecration which we renew at each cenacle and which we seek to live day by day is an unspeakably precious gift that we give to Our Lady for her work of gaining the grace of conversion and salvation for so many today. I've always been convinced that the Marian Movement of Priests is a special call and charism for many in

the Church – for priests and deacons, with religious and laity and their families, and under the authority of the bishops.

V. My own call to form Cenacles

In my first years as a priest, I wanted to be part of a cenacle with other priests, but there were none in my area. No one seemed to talk about it. I felt like a lowly person at the bottom of the totem pole, and didn't know how to get others together to form one. Then, in the early 1990's, after having been an MMP member for more than ten years, I began to feel an urgency that I needed to work on this right away. I took courage and began to ask some of the brother priests – those whom I knew and felt closest to – if they would be interested in coming together once a month to pray the rosary together in the form of a cenacle (the five steps: Holy Spirit prayer, Rosary, prayers for the Holy Father, Blue Book reading, and Consecration). And I found that, yes, there were priests willing to join me; and thus with effort and Our Lady's guidance, I have been able to form cenacles over the years. The groups were always very small (2-5 usually), but I felt an intimacy and a closeness with them that has strengthened me.

VI. Your own call to form cenacles - as priests, as laity, as families

Consider how you came to be a member of the MMP and Our Lady's call to you to pray the rosary. Perhaps you have answered this call well, or perhaps you have struggled. I wish to encourage you at whatever point you may be in your call to form a cenacle. There are many different types of prayer groups, all of which are good, but the MMP cenacle is specifically the Cenacle of Jerusalem as described in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 1, where the Apostles "prayed together with Mary, the Mother of Jesus," awaiting the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Trust that your cenacle and your consecration are deeply important to Our Lady and to her plan. Even if you are only two people praying the rosary together in the form of a cenacle, what you are doing is gratefully and powerfully received by Our Lady. Let us remember that She can do much with very little. If you have not done so already, please don't be afraid to ask someone to pray the rosary with you in a cenacle, either in your home, or at the parish level with the permission of your pastor. We as Catholics tend to pray a lot by ourselves, which is good and powerful, but it is even more so when, as Jesus says, we are "two or more" gathered together in His name.

VII. My Report on the Cenacles in Memphis

Please allow me to share with you about the number of cenacles that we've been blessed to have in my home Diocese of Memphis and in West Tennessee. In 2018, we had 5 different priests' cenacles: 1) the St. Louis Cenacle, meeting monthly in the rectory, 2) the Germantown Cenacle, meeting monthly in a retired priest's home, 3) the St. Mary's Cenacle in Jackson, meeting occasionally in the church, 4) the Spanish language Cenacle, meeting occasionally in the Eucharistic chapel at Resurrection Parish, and 5) the African and African-American Cenacle, meeting occasionally in the Eucharistic chapel at St. Augustine Parish. In all, about thirty different priests have participated. The average number of priests (and some deacons) participating has ranged from three to six at each cenacle. Once there were as many as ten; on a few occasions, it's been just two of us. Memphis is a small diocese with about 85 priests, and so it's easy for all of us to know each other and invite one another to participate. I'm sure each diocese, archdiocese, or eparchy, has a different situation. But imagine if each of them had an MMP cenacle to offer to their priests!

We also have had the following cenacles with the laity in 2018:

January: A cenacle and Mass in the Cathedral, at which about 100 people participated.

May: Five different parishes had a cenacle and Mass, with a total of about 250 participating.

October: Six different parishes had a cenacle and Mass with a total of about 250 participating.

We also have three cenacles that meet weekly in three different parishes, and some home cenacles.

VIII. May Cenacles

Our former National Director, Fr. Francis Geremia, had established the gathering of special May cenacles for Our Lady throughout the country in every state. Although it was too late to compile the information for this year's newsletter, I wish to encourage you, if you are able, to keep them going as before. Hopefully next year in 2020, we can begin to list them on the website and/or in the annual newsletter. I'm sure that Our Lady would be very pleased with this.

IX. Cenacle "Laborers" Needed

Jesus told his disciples to "*ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.*" (Mt 9:38, Lk 10:2)

Are there any priests, deacons, religious or laypersons who feel called and would consider traveling within their local area to start MMP cenacles or to nurture the ones already meeting? For me, it's always been a labor of love and joy to do this. I feel that more prayerful, conscientious and dedicated apostles are needed, and I ask Our Lady to inspire more of you. Thank you for considering this call, and may Our Good Lord bless you, and Our Lady hold you all in her Immaculate Heart!

X. Keep Your Cenacles “Pure”

In the early years (1974), Our Lady told Fr. Gobbi:

“This is not one of many movements, but it is my Movement, my son.” (37e) “Do not rely on other charisms or on other confirmations; do not look to other works or other plans. This is the work which I am carrying out in the Church through you...No external interference will ever be able to harm this work of mine...” (48 d,f)

Having been begun by Our Lady Herself, the Marian Movement of Priests is, therefore, not one among many other movements. Over the years, individuals have sought to introduce other movements into the cenacles. We have to say “no” to this, so as not to undermine the charism and singular mission of the Marian Movement of Priests.

Our Lady in her messages has given us the specific format to follow for her cenacles, as found in the MMP cenacle guide booklet. You can request a copy from our office. As a rule, when giving out blue books, please include this guide as well. It is necessary that the cenacle format be followed exactly. It is my duty, and that of all those charged with responsibility in the MMP, to preserve and protect its integrity. Fr. Larroque also continues to reinforce this in his annual letters. Again this year, he wrote, “I remind you that this fidelity means assuring that **other messages are not introduced** into the cenacles.” It is so important to follow the Blessed Virgin’s desire for the purity of each of your Cenacles.

Movimiento Sacerdotal Mariano

Ave Maria!

Del Director Nacional

Muy queridos hermanos de hablar Español,

Yo soy Padre Ricardo Cortese, sacerdote de la Diócesis de Memphis. Desde que tenía 17 años, he estudiado y hablado Español. Fui estudiante de intercambio en 1974 y viví por 5 semanas con una familia en Caracas, Venezuela. He visitado también Colombia y España. Varias veces he pasado a México, y con tanto amor he visitado como peregrino el Santuario de la Virgen de Guadalupe. En el año 1998, participé con otro sacerdote de Memphis en el Encuentro Mundial para el Jubileo del Año 2000 que tuvo lugar en la Basílica de la N.S. de Guadalupe en México. Estuve por 5 días con 1200 sacerdotes de México, 400 de la América del Sur, Central y Caribe, y 800 más de otros países del mundo. ¡Que experiencia tan hermosa! Ahora soy el nuevo Director y Responsable del Movimiento Sacerdotal Mariano (MSM) por los EEUU y sus territorios.

Quiero con amor servir a todos Uds. y pasar a visitarles cuando puedo, y participar en sus cenáculos del MSM. Quiero animarles con el amor y devoción que tengo en mi corazón para Jesús y María. Favor de hacer contacto con la Secretaria Nacional, Tammy, para darme saber lo que necesitan, como puedo servirles, y si desearía una visita. Ahora, tenemos listo para imprimir el Libro Azul que contiene las 604 mensajes de la Virgen al Padre Gobbi. Este Libro Azul ya tiene algo de 20 impresiones de obispos y cardenales de todo el mundo. Favor de hacer contacto con la Oficina Nacional para ordenar sus copias. Se pide una donación de \$20, o lo que pueden ofrecer para ayudar con el costo del imprimir y del correo. Gracias.

La verdad es que por más de 30 años he servido la gente hispana de la Diócesis de Memphis. ¡Tenemos un cenáculo para sacerdotes de hablar Español en Memphis, y también la participación de mucha gente hispana con sus familias y niños! Que alegría tengo con la gente hispana porque son buena gente, tan amable, y que ama tanto a Dios, a la Virgencita, a la Iglesia y a la Familia. El MSM nos ayuda vivir y crecer en este amor en estos tiempos tan difíciles. Al hacer nuestra consagración al Corazón Inmaculado de María, recibimos su protección y gracia. Y con los cenáculos del MSM podemos adelantar el día del triunfo de su Corazón Inmaculado en el mundo.

Sin decir más, porque mi carta a Uds. es cortita, quiero pedir su ayuda en asistirme formar los cenáculos del MSM en su familia, su parroquia, y su Diócesis con el permiso de su párroco y obispo. Muchísimas gracias, y con mucho cariño a todos Uds., les pido de Dios su bendición, y también, la intercesión poderosísima del Corazón Inmaculado de María.

Sinceramente,

Rev. Richard Cortese

Pe. Ricardo Cortese

MMP NATIONAL RETREATS
Malvern Retreat House (St. Joseph's in the Hills)
Malvern, Pennsylvania

This year's retreats will be held at the beautiful Malvern Retreat House which was the site of the MMP clergy retreat with Father Gobbi in November 1990 where he received message #437 "The Hour of the Great Trial." Three bishops and two hundred fifty priests were in attendance.

Retreat Master



We are pleased to welcome Fr. Gerard "Gerry" McCloskey from Belfast, Ireland who will give our two daily conferences and lead the Holy Hours. Fr. Gerry, a diocesan priest, first made his consecration while still a seminarian and, since his ordination to the priesthood in 1985, has been regularly attending Cenacles of the Marian Movement of Priests. He has given clergy, lay and youth retreats in the form of a Cenacle in Ireland and England over many years. Fr. Gerry met with Fr. Gobbi many times during his visits to Ireland and also while attending international retreats in Italy. In the forthcoming retreats at Malvern, Fr. Gerry hopes to remind us of the light-filled way along which all of us must walk in order to live the consecration which we have made to her Immaculate Heart. The schedule will follow the format of a cenacle and include the recitation of the Holy Rosary prayed throughout the day, and the reading and meditation on the messages. Daily Mass will be celebrated, and the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for Eucharistic Adoration.

Any updated information will be posted on their website:
www.malvernretreat.com

FOR THE CLERGY:

Monday, Sept. 9, 2019 (4 PM) to Friday, Sept. 13, 2019 (9 AM)
(N.B. All participants will have to submit a letter of suitability to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia)

FOR THE LAITY:

Friday, Sept. 13, 2019 (3 PM) to Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019 (10 AM)
This weekend retreat is open to everyone. Bring your family and friends!

TRAVEL

The Retreat House is at 315 South Warren Ave. Malvern, PA 19355 conveniently located only a thirty minute drive from the Philadelphia Airport. Taxi service to Malvern is available. Directions can be found on their website.

ONLINE REGISTRATION

Go to www.malvernretreat.com and click on “calendar.” Scroll down to the date and go to the MMP page. Click on “register now” and select “create an account” to register. You may call the retreat house if you have any questions or need assistance.

Tel. (610) 644-0400

CAPACITY

We urge you to register early. Capacity at the retreat house is set at **50** for the clergy (Sept. 9-13), and **85** for the laity (Sept. 13-15) Even if the retreat house rooms fill up, however, you have the option of staying at local hotels located just a few minutes from the retreat house. Local commuters are welcome to attend, but are also required to register with the retreat house in advance.

COST

Clergy Retreat: **\$375** (includes 4 nights lodging and all meals)

Laity Retreat: **\$220** (includes 2 nights lodging and all meals)

Weekend Commuters: **\$100** (for meals and to attend the retreat)

International Clergy Retreat – June 23-29, 2019
Shrine of Merciful Love - Collevalezza, Italy

If interested, please refer to Fr. Larroque's letter for further details. Each year, we are asked by many MMP priests around the world for financial assistance to attend this retreat in Italy. Please contact us if you would consider being a sponsor. The priests who were helped by your generosity in past years are grateful and have promised to remember you in a special way in their Masses and prayers.

Telephone Cenacles – Daily (7 days/week) at 6:45 PM EST

All are invited to join in. Telephone cenacles are an ideal way for shut-ins and the homebound to pray the rosary in a cenacle with others. Simply dial (712) 775-7031, and then enter the access code 749342 followed by the # sign. Please feel free to inform your homebound parishioners and friends about this wonderful opportunity.

Important and Final Mailing List Update

Since I'm new as National Director, I have decided to mail the annual newsletter to everyone on the existing list of MMP members that was established over past years. It is important that you **return the enclosed card at your earliest convenience** if you would like your name to remain on our mailing list. We have personalized the card to simplify the process. **If we don't get a response, we might have to remove your name from our database.** I apologize for asking you to do this yet again this year. Thank you for your understanding and assistance in this matter.

New Enrollments

Please call us to request additional cards if you wish to add new members who are not already on our mailing list, or if you would like to register a new cenacle.

Book orders

If you wish to place an order, we ask that you send the request by itself in a **separate envelope**, so that it can be quickly identified and set aside. This will avoid delays in processing.

Spanish Book

Last year, Fr. Larroque asked us to print the Spanish blue book to supply all of the countries of Latin America. We feel that Our Lady is asking us to generously help in this way. We hope to have books available by this summer. Please call the office for more information on placing an advance order.

Fr. Gobbi's Biography

We are making progress and hope to conclude the English translation of the biography by next year. Our apologies for the delay.

Thank you for your support!

I extend my sincere gratitude to all of you for continuing to support us generously with your gifts, and most especially with your prayers, both of which are needed to continue Our Blessed Mother's work. The Marian Movement of Priests is recognized by the IRS as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; therefore, all of your financial gifts are tax deductible.

Bequests & Our Lady's Blue Book

Would you consider including a charitable bequest to the MMP in your last will and testament?

A bequest in your will or trust, life insurance designation, financial institution beneficiary designation, or stock donation should include the following information:

Tax ID# 01-0461075

The Marian Movement of Priests P.O. Box 8 St. Francis, ME 04774
Contact: Tammy Ouellette, National Secretary Tel. (207) 398-3375

We have been asked to help other countries with their book printings, according to our means. Owing to a generous bequest in 2018, we are able to help fund the Spanish book printing and will ship 30,000 copies to Latin American countries this year! We are so grateful for this! In a similar way, your bequests also can assist with the cost of printing and shipping more books in English and Spanish (and possibly in other languages) to supply countries throughout the world who themselves do not have the financial means to do so. In her messages, Our Lady impresses upon us the importance of her book of messages:

“[My book] has been the instrument for carrying to the hearts and souls of so many beloved children the voice of the heavenly Mother (282b)...[it is] a gift of my Immaculate Heart. ...Read it, my beloved sons; meditate on it; live it! Have no doubt; I am speaking to you. Through these words I am present in it and manifest myself. Only tomorrow will you understand the importance of this maternal message of mine.” (284h,j)

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I humbly rely on your assistance and your prayers as I undertake this labor of love. I look forward to meeting many of you at this year’s retreats and as I travel to conduct cenacles. May God bless you and Our Lady keep you ever safe in the secure refuge of her Immaculate Heart.

Sincerely,

Rev. Richard Cortese

Fr. Richard Cortese
National Director