M

IXED COMMUNITY

In the Marist Institute, this term applies to the communities of lay people and brothers living under the same roof. The word “mixed” indicates the concurrence of different vocations within the same community experience. It is a conventional expression used by the Secretariat of Laity[[1]](#footnote-1).

As we live out the Marist charism, we discover community life expressed in different ways and styles, mixed communities being one of them. Several Provinces in the Institute have implemented this form of community life. Some of them include laity, religious and priests. Others have an international and intercultural character. They usually live in houses belonging to the brothers. Living in a lay person’s house is also possible.

The dynamics of a mixed community elicit life sharing, dialogue regarding the projects in hand, and the celebration of faith. Fraternal meetings create unity, the different vocations become complementary, and personal identities grow stronger. Laity and brothers fraternally welcome the contrast and mutual enrichment between their specific vocations. The experience gives rise to new ways of understanding both the lay and the religious vocation.



The brothers bring to these communities the gifts of the charism and their religious vocation, together with their spiritual journey and community experience; the laity bring the gift of their lay vocation, a domestic family style, their Christian community experience, and a particular experience of the charism[[2]](#footnote-2).

The community project is often a tool leading to a common vision, and fostering good community relations, spiritual growth according to each member’s vocation and life stage, the mission, and a joyful atmosphere. It seeks to establish horizontal and fraternal links within the community. It determines each person’s functions regarding the mission, and distributes work with equity, respecting the specific contribution of each member.

Mixed communities want to be a place for communion, allowing its members to weave fraternal ties among them based on an identical experience: the one of having been *captured* by God in the following of Christ with the spirit of Champagnat. They require a level of human and Christian maturity enabling healthy interpersonal relationships, a thoughtful spiritual journey, and the capacity to discern the will of God regarding both personal and community life.

1. Cf. documents of the Secretariat for Laity: *Living the Marist Charism with Others* (Santa María de los Andes); and *Adding Lives, Multiplying Horizons – Community Experiences of the Institute,* Rome, 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. GAST, 20-22, 90-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)