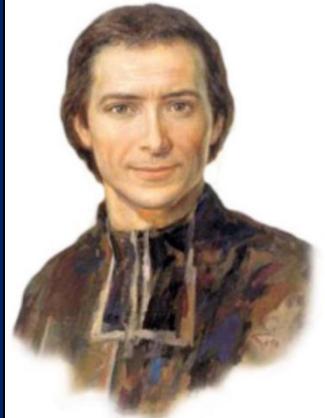


NINE DAYS OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION LEADING TO THE FEAST OF ST. MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT 28 MAY – 05 JUNE 2023

As we prepare to celebrate the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat on June 6, 2023, which as well is the culmination of the Year of Marist Vocations, the Secretariat of Brothers Today invite all Marists of Champagnat to pray this novena from May 28, Solemnity of Pentecost, to June 5. The prayer and reflection for each day contains a short account of the life of our founder taken from the biography written by Br. Jean Baptiste Furet.

You could either integrate it in your daily community prayer, include it as part of the Eucharistic celebration, or use it as an independent prayer altogether.



Day One, 28 May 2023: Solemnity of Pentecost

Marcellin filled with the Holy Spirit

Invitation

On this first day of prayer and reflection leading to the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat, let us pray for the grace to be open to receive the breath of the Holy Spirit, who inspires us in our life and mission as Marists of Champagnat.

Song to the Holy Spirit (*optional*)

Reading

Marcellin was led by the Spirit of God. He knew from the very beginning the means he should adopt to attain the end he had in view in founding the Society. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 19)
Even before his thoughts turned to a vocation, Marcellin's behavior has always been exemplary; but from the time that he decided to become a priest, it was even more edifying. (Life, Pt. I, Ch. 2) Father Champagnat's style was very simple but elevated; he had a vigor of expression and a tone of conviction; he spoke in passionate words and with animated countenance: his whole manner denoted a man filled with the Spirit of God; and that was what moved the Brothers and made his instructions interesting to them, so that they preferred to listen to him than to the sermons of the most distinguished preachers. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 3) The Spirit of God, which guided Father Champagnat in establishing his Institute, made him clearly understand that, to produce all its fruits, the education given by the Brothers should, as far as possible, cater for the needs and aspirations of the times. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 22)

A moment of silence

3 Hail Mary's
Glory Be

Mary, Our Good Mother, *pray for us.*

St. Joseph, *pray for us.*

St. Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us.*

All our Marist saints and martyrs, *pray for us.*

Marcellin looked up to Mary as Good Mother

Invitation

On this second day of prayer and reflection leading to the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat, let us pray for the grace to relate intimately with Mary as our Good Mother and always have recourse to her as did our Founder.

Song to Mary (*optional*)

Reading



Looking on the Blessed Virgin as his Mother and as the path which would lead him to Jesus, he placed under her protection, his studies, his vocation and all his plans; he consecrated himself to her every day and offered her all his actions so that she might deign to present them to her divine Son. In the mind of the pious Founder, everything in the Institute should belong to Mary and should be used to honor her. To love this admirable Queen, to serve her and spread devotion to her, faithful to the mind of the Church, as an outstanding way of loving and serving Jesus more easily and more perfectly: this was his precise aim in founding the Society. That is how Marcellin justified his exhortation to the Brothers to look upon Mary as their Mother, their Patroness, and their Model: moreover, he wanted them to have towards her the feelings appropriate to a Mother, a

Patroness, a Model and a first Superior. It was on the basis of these principles that the practices which we now record, were established in the Society in order to honor Mary. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 7)

A moment of silence

**3 Hail Mary's
Glory Be**

Mary, Our Good Mother, *pray for us.*
St. Joseph, *pray for us.*
St. Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us.*
All our Marist saints and martyrs, *pray for us.*

Our distinctively Marist characteristics: humility, simplicity, modesty

Invitation

On this third day of prayer and reflection leading to the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat, let us pray for the grace to concretely live the virtues of humility, simplicity and modesty, and by our example teach others to do the same.

Song to Mary (*optional*)

Reading

When Father Champagnat founded his Institute he had two goals in mind: to provide the benefits of Christian education for poor country children; and to honor Mary by the imitation of her virtues and the propagation of her devotion.



However, since the Blessed Virgin was particularly remarkable for her humility, and since the role of teaching little children is necessarily a humble one, he wanted humility, simplicity and modesty to be the distinctive characteristics of his new Institute. So that the Brothers might fully grasp this intention of his, Father Champagnat gave them the name of the Little Brothers of Mary; this name was to remind them constantly of what they should be. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 12)

A moment of silence

3 Hail Mary's
Glory Be

Mary, Our Good Mother, *pray for us.*
St. Joseph, *pray for us.*
St. Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us.*
All our Marist saints and martyrs, *pray for us.*

Day Four, 31 May 2023: Feast of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary

Marcellin visited his brothers frequently.

Invitation

On this fourth day of prayer and reflection leading to the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat, let us pray for the grace to be real Christ-bearers to all we meet and bring Good News to every encounter.

Song to Mary (*optional*)

Reading

In spite of all that, the tender affection he had for them led him to visit them frequently in order to see at first hand whether they needed anything; on these visits, he consoled and encouraged them, taught them how to sanctify their sufferings and, when necessary, how to prepare to die a happy death. As soon as a Brother took sick in one of the houses, Marcellin got him to come or sent to bring him, so that he might be properly attended to. (Life, Pt. II. Ch. 15)

Then, to a community shortly before he was due to visit them:

"I long to see you all, to embrace you and assure you of all the affection I have for you in Jesus Christ. I could not possibly have better news than your letters bring: that you are all well and happy. Your happiness and contentment will last as long as you are united and love one another." (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 15)



A moment of silence

3 Hail Mary's Glory Be

Mary, Our Good Mother, *pray for us.*
St. Joseph, *pray for us.*
St. Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us.*
All our Marist saints and martyrs, *pray for us.*

Day Five, 01 June 2023: Feast of Jesus Christ the Eternal High Priest

Marcellin's love for the Holy Eucharist

Invitation

On this fifth day of prayer and reflection leading to the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat, let us pray for the grace to love as God loves us, manifested in the sacrifice of Jesus' own body and blood.

Song about Christ's Body and Blood (*optional*)

Reading

"A priest", Marcellin countered, "should be like Melchizedek, without parents; that is, they should not preoccupy him." "We are not priests", he continued, "in order to be useful to our



families but to serve the Church and to save souls. (Life, Pt. I, Ch. 3)

His piety in celebrating Mass was a source of admiration. His recollected countenance, his earnestness, the reverence of his manner, his pious tone of voice full of verve, were all dear indications of the sentiments that overflowed his heart and of the deep impression made on him by the holiness of the august sacrifice which he offered to God. He never let a

day pass without saying Mass; sometimes, when travelling, he was known to journey up to eighteen miles and more, in order to have that consolation. Often, on such occasions, he would fast during the entire morning, in the hope of being able to celebrate Holy Mass on reaching his destination. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 6)

A moment of silence

3 Hail Mary's Glory Be

Mary, Our Good Mother, *pray for us.*
St. Joseph, *pray for us.*
St. Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us.*
All our Marist saints and martyrs, *pray for us.*

Day Six, 02 June 2023

Family Spirit

Invitation

On this sixth day of prayer and reflection leading to the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat, let us pray for the grace to be united as a Marist family, with one heart and one soul, respecting, loving, and trusting one another.

Song about community, family spirit, fraternity (*optional*)

Reading



To see charity and union reign amongst his Brothers, was his greatest delight and supreme consolation. In a circular letter summoning them to the Retreat, he wrote: "How wonderful it is that in a few days I shall have the sweet pleasure of grasping you in my arms and of affirming with the Psalmist: 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together

in unity.' The very thought fills me with pleasure! It is indeed a wonderful consolation to see you all united, having one heart and one soul, like a single family, all intent only on the glory of God and the interests of holy religion, and battling under the same banner, that of his Holy Mother. I leave you in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, center of love and unity." (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 15) Be fathers to them (the children) rather than teachers; then they will respect you and obey you without difficulty. The spirit of a Brothers' school ought to be a family spirit. Now, in a good family, a well-run family, sentiments of respect, love and mutual trust predominate, and not fear of punishments. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 22)

A moment of silence

**3 Hail Mary's
Glory Be**

Mary, Our Good Mother, *pray for us.*
St. Joseph, *pray for us.*
St. Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us.*
All our Marist saints and martyrs, *pray for us.*

Day Seven, 03 June 2023

Our Marist Style of Education

Invitation

On this seventh day of prayer and reflection leading to the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat, let us pray for the grace to always be conscious that as Christian educators, our main goal is to make Jesus known and loved by children and young people.

Song along the theme of the love of Jesus (*optional*)

Reading

Therefore, keep stressing the mysteries and the life of Our Lord; speak to the children often about his virtues, his sufferings, the love he showed them in dying on the cross and the treasures of grace which he left them in the sacraments. The science of religion consists entirely in knowing Christ: even more, it is in him that eternal life consists and the saints in heaven do nothing other than study, contemplate and love Jesus Christ who is their happiness. To impart



knowledge of Our Lord, ought, therefore, to be the goal of all your catechism lessons and you should never fail to speak of that. divine Master in any of them. The more you make him known, the more you make him loved, the more you weaken the reign of sin, the more you establish that of virtue and the more you ensure the salvation of your pupils."

In a great number of letters, he reiterated this advice, urging the Brothers to remind the children constantly how much Jesus loved them and how much, therefore, they were obliged to love him. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 6)

It is not genius that is needed for the works of God and to form children into good Christians, but great devotedness, solid virtue, the spirit of prayer and confidence in God. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 3)

A moment of silence

3 Hail Mary's Glory Be

Mary, Our Good Mother, *pray for us.*
St. Joseph, *pray for us.*
St. Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us.*
All our Marist saints and martyrs, *pray for us.*

Day Eight, 04 June 2023: Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

The Exercise of the Presence of God

Invitation

On this eighth day of prayer and reflection leading to the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat, let us pray for the grace of constancy in the practice of the exercise of the presence of God, always conscious that God is with us and among us all the time.

Song about the Trinity, or based on Psalm 139 (*optional*)

Reading

Father Champagnat wanted the Brothers' practice of the exercise of the presence of God, to take the following form:

1. To keep themselves in the state of grace; to watch over their thoughts, words and entire conduct so that nothing would be said or done against conscience and offensive to God; to combat temptations by the thought: GOD SEES ME.
2. To offer all their actions to God and to seek in all things, the greater glory of God.
3. Often during the day and in the wakeful moments at night, to say short, fervent prayers.
4. To take Our Lord Jesus Christ for model in their actions; to keep in mind his virtues, his suffering, his way of dealing with men and to strive to act as he did, or would have done, in like circumstances.
5. To see God in his creatures, praising him and blessing him for their service to us; to place our trust in Providence, submitting to its designs in all events whatsoever, and to expect from it alone, the help required in all our difficulties and needs.

It can easily be seen that this method of practicing the presence of God, is at the same time easy and full of benefit. (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 5)



A moment of silence

3 Hail Mary's

Glory Be

Mary, Our Good Mother, *pray for us.*
St. Joseph, *pray for us.*
St. Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us.*
All our Marist saints and martyrs, *pray for us.*

Day Nine, 05 June 2023

“Love your vocation.”

Invitation

On this ninth day of prayer and reflection leading to the Feast of St. Marcellin Champagnat, let us pray for the grace to be faithful and steadfast in the commitment we made in response to our call as Marists of Champagnat today.

Song about vocation, saying ‘yes’ to God (*optional*)



Reading

"Since it is God's will", he told his parents, "that I embrace this vocation, he will give me the intelligence and everything else necessary to do my studies. I am going to make a start and expect his help. This he cannot refuse me because it is he who calls me." (Life, Pt. II, Ch. 3)

"Love your vocation; preserve it; it is the means God wishes to use in order to save you; you will be saved, in fact, if you have the happiness of dying in the Society of Mary. I have assisted at the death of many Brothers. Not one have I found who, on his deathbed, repented of having become a Religious, regretted having persevered in his vocation; or was sorry to be facing death in the habit of a Brother of Mary." (Life, Pt. I, Ch. 21)

Be faithful and steadfast to the end, with manly courage. Remain true to the spirit of poverty and detachment and let the daily observance of your holy Rule preserve you from ever violating the sacred vow by which you are bound to the fairest of all the virtues, and the frailest. There are difficulties in leading the life of a good religious, but grace sweetens all their bitterness. Jesus and Mary will come to your aid, and besides, life is soon over, and eternity never ends. Oh, what consolation we have, when about to appear before God, to remember that we have lived in the favor of Mary, and in her own Society. May it please that Good Mother to preserve you, give you increase and bring you to holiness. (Spiritual Testament)

A moment of silence

3 Hail Mary's

Glory Be



caring for and generating
MARIST LIFE
YEAR OF MARIST VOCATIONS
20 MAY 2022 - 06 JUNE 2023

PRAYER FOR THE YEAR OF MARIST VOCATIONS

Heavenly Father,

You answered the prayer of Marcellin Champagnat two hundred years ago and delivered the Institute from seeming sterility by blessing it with a prodigious surge of growth.

Throughout our history, you have done wonderful things through the men who dedicated themselves as Little Brothers of Mary and the lay men and women who have widened the tent to share the Marist charism and mission.

We praise and thank you for this close collaboration to make Jesus and Mary known and loved by children and young people in places where we are present.

Lord of the harvest, we find ourselves today in a turbulent world where the founder's dream continues to be relevant more than ever. Help us to care for and generate Marist life and keep us rooted in the original passion that inspired us so that we can boldly respond to the emerging needs of our times.

Like Marcellin, we pray today that you increase our number by guiding to our Institute those whom you call. Show us the young men you have chosen and enable us to accompany them in nurturing their Marist vocation.

Inspire us to take up this journey of love for and service to the least favored as Marists of Champagnat.

Mary, our Good Mother, we believe this is your work; we are confident that you will not allow the lamp to be extinguished for lack of oil.

Accompany our prayers to your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



Mary, Our Good Mother, *pray for us.*
St. Joseph, *pray for us.*
St. Marcellin Champagnat, *pray for us.*
All our Marist saints and martyrs, *pray for us.*