

BICENTENARY PRAYER
celebrating
the
Foundation of The Little Brothers of Mary
2 January 2017



INTRODUCTION

On 2nd January 1817, Marcellin Champagnat welcomed two young men into a house which he had rented in the town of La Valla where he was assistant pastor. Their names were Jean-Baptiste Audras and Jean-Marie Granjon. They became the first Marist Brothers, and the date became known as the Foundation Day. Later that year, these two Brothers began to teach the young people of La Valla, thus beginning the first Marist school. Today we pause to recall and celebrate these early beginnings and pray that the continued commitment of all Marists to this mission will be blessed into the future.

OPENING: I Arise Today (Rita Connelly)

I arise today through the strength of
heaven
Light of sun, radiance of moon
Splendor of fire, speed of lightning
Swiftiness of wind, depth of the sea
Stability of earth, firmness of rock
I arise today through God's strength
to pilot me
God's eye to look before me
God's wisdom to guide me
God's way to lie before me
God's shield to protect me
From all who shall wish me ill
Afar and a-near
Alone and in a multitude

Against every cruel, merciless power
That may oppose my body and soul
Christ with me, Christ before me
Christ behind me, Christ in me
Christ beneath me, Christ above me
Christ on my right, Christ on my left
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down
Christ when I arise,
Christ to shield me
Christ in the heart of everyone
who thinks of me
Christ in the mouth of everyone
who speaks of me
I arise today

READINGS

1. **The First Christian Community**

The first Christian converts remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. And everyone was filled with awe; the apostles worked many signs and miracles. [Acts 2:42-43]

2. **Love one another**

I give you a new commandment: love one another; you must love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognise you as my disciples. [John 13:34-35]

3. **Spiritual Testament of St Marcellin**

Also, dear Brothers, I beg of you with all the love of my heart, and by all the love you bear me, keep ever alive among you the charity of Christ. Love one another as Jesus Christ has loved you. Be of one heart and one mind. Have the world say of the Little Brothers of Mary, what they said of the first Christians: 'See how they love one another!' That is the desire of my heart and my burning wish, at this last moment of my life. Yes, my dearest Brothers, hear these last words of your Father, which are those of our Blessed Saviour: 'Love one another!'

4. **A vital faith community**

We Marists are a vital faith community, an expression of Church that embraces God's mission with Marian joy, hope, and audacity. [Vision Statement, Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat]

PERSONAL REFLECTION & SHARING

RESPONSE: SALVE REGINA

A new setting composed by Br Michael Herry and sung by an international group of Marist Brothers from all 5 continents.



Bicentenary Fourviere Painting by Michael Galovic, 2017

PRAYERS OF PETITION

1. Our beginnings were shaped by the caring relationship between a young country priest and a group of young people, living in a time of great social turmoil. The priest was Marcellin Champagnat; the young people were Jean-Marie Granjon, Jean-Baptiste Audras, Jean-Claude Audras, Antoine Couturier, Barthélemy Badard, Gabriel Rivat, and Jean-Baptiste Furet. They became our founding community at La Valla. [WFR 2] For all young Marists setting out on the road to 'make Jesus known and loved', we pray.
Response: *Jesus our Brother and Mary Our Good Mother, hear our prayer.*
2. Simple and uneducated men, they lived with great simplicity and unity. Their day was spent in learning how to write, read and teach, and in manual work that sustained them economically. They lived in the midst of the people and shared their lot. [WFR 3] For the gift of simplicity and unity in our local community, we pray.
Response: *Jesus our Brother and Mary Our Good Mother, hear our prayer.*
3. Ever more deeply they discovered the presence of God in their midst, and learnt to rely upon Providence. Together they developed a thirst for Jesus and for following him in Mary's way. They developed a love of Mary as a sure way of centring their hearts on Jesus. They competed with each other to help someone in need. [WFR 4] For a love of Jesus in the way of Mary, we pray.
Response: *Jesus our Brother and Mary Our Good Mother, hear our prayer.*
4. Like Mary setting out in haste to the hill country, each week they went out into the surrounding hamlets to make Jesus known and loved. They cared for poor children and welcomed them into their home. [WFR 5] For the poor children in our care that we love them unconditionally as Jesus loves them, we pray.
Response: *Jesus our Brother and Mary Our Good Mother, hear our prayer.*
5. This Montagne event was for Marcellin a summons from God. His compassion aroused him to immediately put into action his belief, *We must have Brothers!* The needs of young people and his responding vision for a group of dedicated evangelizers was now confirmed. They would bring the good news of Jesus to people on the margins of church and society. [WFR 9] For all people on the margins that we respond to their plight with compassion, we pray.
Response: *Jesus our Brother and Mary Our Good Mother, hear our prayer.*
6. Today we pause to recall and celebrate 200 years of Marist mission in the way of St Marcellin. For all those who have gone before us and for those of us gathered here today, that our commitment to this mission into the future be blessed, we pray.
Response: *Jesus our Brother and Mary Our Good Mother, hear our prayer.*

BICENTENARY PRAYER

Mary,
dawn of the new times,
We thank you because you have always
done everything among us
and you continue doing it down to today.
We place ourselves confidently in your hands
and abandon ourselves to your tenderness.
We also entrust to you each of the persons
who, like us, feel privileged
to bear your name.
We renew this day our consecration to you
as well as our firm intention
to contribute to building a Church
which reflects your face.
You, source of our renewal,
accompany our fidelity,
as you accompanied those who preceded us.

On this the bicentenary for all Marists
in the way of St Marcellin,
we feel your presence next to us
and for that we give you thanks.
Amen.



*Bicentenary La Valla Painting by
Michael Galovic, 2017*

*“Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living!”
[Pope Francis, 201*

