

COMMUNITY IN SEARCH (26)

Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church

- **Greeting Mary:**

We come to you, Mother of our Lord and Mother of us all, to thank you for your Yes that gave us the incarnation of God's own Yes and brought life to its fullness. We ask you, teach us to follow you in saying our Yes with faith and courage. You know the cost of living the Yes; protect ours integrity and joy. Ask your divine Son for the grace always to repeat our Yes with an ever-growing surrender and to experience how this increases the meaningfulness of our life. Under your inspiration may we help to build the Kingdom of God today and every day, for ever and ever. Amen.



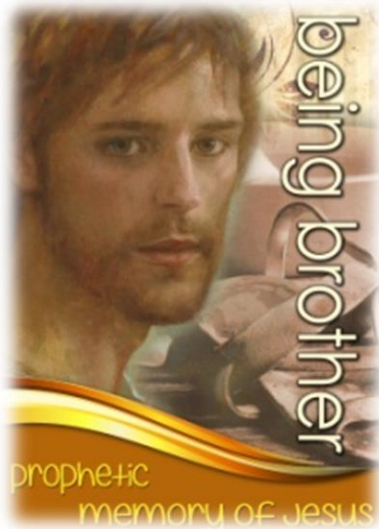
- **Reflection:**

At the beginning of his vocational experience (cf Acts 22:3-21) the Apostle Paul asks, "What should I do, Lord?" The question signals the radical change of attitude which has occurred in him, having left his own path to follow that of Jesus. The answer will not be found in the exact fulfillment of the law and the traditions of the Synagogue, but rather in his listening to people, his reflection on daily events and his contemplation of the Word.

Religious Brothers, in facing the present, have to risk asking the same question as Paul: "What should I do, Lord?" but this question is only sincere when preceded by the willingness to "get up", because that is the first response required (cf Acts 22:10.16). In other words, fidelity to the present time requires personal willingness to change and to be disturbed. Without it, there is little value in renewing structures.

A Brother does not ask the question of himself but directs his question to the Lord Jesus because he wants to know and do His will. He will need to be a contemplative, to be able to find Him in the people and in daily events in the light of the Word. This enlightenment allows the Brother to interpret daily life with the heart of God and to live every moment as a time of grace and salvation.

Consecrated life, like all forms of Christian life, is a quest for perfection in love. The Brother's vocation and his commitment to be memory of this obligation for all is also the motive for a greater effort. In this search they have to be very attentive to the erosion of fraternal life in community. There are many factors that tend to destroy it if the Brothers do not work at it daily and do not repair the damages or frictions which occur. Part of the conversion process is going back continually to basics, to their prophetic mission in the Church: living brotherhood as a gift from God and strengthening it with God's help and the commitment of the Brothers, within the community and also outwards from the community.



- **Spiritual Reading:** Fr. Champagnat to Br. Lawrence

One can be solidly virtuous and have a bad character; but the defective character of single brother is enough to disturb unity in a house and make all the members of the community suffer. One can be regular, pious, and zealous for his sanctification; one can, in a word, love God and neighbor, without having the perfection of charity, that is to say, the "little virtues" which are the fruits, the adornment and the crown of charity. Without the daily habitual practice of the little virtues, there is no perfect unity in communities. The neglect or absence

of the little virtues is the major, and I might say the only, cause of dissensions, divisions and discord among people.

Responsorial Psalm: 42 (As the Deer)

Refrain:

**As the deer longs for running
streams,
so I long, so I long, so I long for
you.**

Verse 1

A-thirst my soul for you the God who
is my life!

When shall I see, when shall I see,
see the face of God? (Refrain)

Verse 2

Echoes meet as deep is calling unto
deep,
over my head, all your mighty waters,
sweeping over me. (Refrain)

Verse 3

Continually the foe delights in
taunting me:

“Where is God, where is your God?”
Where, O where, are you? (Refrain)

Verse 4

Defend me, God, send forth your
light and your truth,
they will lead me to your holy
mountain,

to your dwelling place. (Refrain)

Verse 5

Then I shall go unto the altar of my
God.
Praising you, O my joy and gladness,
I shall praise your name. (Refrain)

Moment of Silence: *Silent music is played*

Gospel of the day:

Personal Intercessions:

Our Father:

Final Prayer:

Creator and Father, we thank You for the gift of life as we are gathered today, aware of your choice of us to be your co- creators, your people on the mission of bringing the Good News of Jesus to our world. This is a wonderful and awesome involvement in the saving and life-giving work of your Son, and we take up the challenge of today, relying entirely on your being-with-us as our strength, our wisdom, and our love. Together a world that is more responsive to the compassion of your unconditional and never-failing love. Just as you are the inspiration of our lives, we pray that our lives may inspire men and women to work with us in our Marist family, in our life of service to the needy and marginalized of our little world that your kingdom may come on earth. Amen.