



Guided by the star of Bethlehem, let us create homes of light

Christmas Message for 2020 of Br. Ernesto Sanchez Barba, Superior General

Dear Marists of Champagnat,

Warm greetings from Rome. I wish the very best for each of you, your communities and families, in the midst of the challenging situation we are experiencing across the world due to the pandemic.

To speak of Christmas is to refer to the light of God in our midst. A light that shines in the darkness. It seems that in this year 2020 there has been a lot of darkness and so it is harder for us to discover this light amid all that we are living through. And yet, that light has never faltered.

Three months ago, I sent a Circular to the Institute, inviting everyone to build “homes of light”, to care for life and generate new life.

I invite you to be watchful for our inner light to remain aflame, so that together we can be the “Marist Charismatic Family”, “Beacons of Hope in the midst of this troubled world”, in the words of the XXII General Chapter.

Christmas is a time to look for ways to rekindle that light:

- the light that comes from the Good News of having God among us, for that is what Christmas is all about.
- the light that gives us hope to face the uncertainty that surrounds us.
- the light that helps us to overcome our fears and anxieties (which may have increased in this special time the world is living through).
- the light that we glimpse in the generosity and dedication of so many people in their service to others.
- the light that leads us to imagine a different future, one that we want to create together under the watchful gaze of God. Like the star of Bethlehem that led the Magi from the East to go on their quest beyond their cultures and homelands.



In my Circular I mentioned the idea of caring for the light that is in each of us, developing our inner lives and spirituality. We must look within and there perceive the light of God shining brightly, a source of hope.

We learn from Mary how to do this. We can imagine her heart, so free and full of God, and therefore transparent to God's light. The light that came from within her was the light of God shining in and through her. We are invited to have the same experience.

We are also invited to discern the light of everyone around us, in our communities, families, fraternities, workplaces.

We are invited to discern the light of the most vulnerable, those who lack even the basics of life. We go out of our way to share what we have, to share our very selves. And to let their light shine on us.

To be a beacon of hope in this troubled world is an invitation for us to let our light shine, not just as individuals, but as communities and families, as a global Marist family.

Marcellin was a light in the midst of the dark situations he had to live through. Like him, let us be light for those around us.

Guided by the star of Bethlehem, let us build "homes of light", in this particular moment of fragility and vulnerability around the world.

My best wishes to each of you, your families, your communities, your fraternities. May this Christmas and the coming year 2021 be full of hope for you.

Faternally

