

INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS

**INTERNATIONAL FORUM
ON THE LAY MARIST VOCATION**

**WELCOMING, NURTURING, LIVING,
SHARING OUR VOCATION**

"Your sons and daughters will prophesy" (Joel 3, 1)



**GUIDE FOR FORMATION TEAMS WORKING WITH LAYPEOPLE
IN PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS**

Foreword

Dear Marists of Champagnat:

For a little over a year now, around the world we have been living through a time of both intense crisis and opportunity. The pandemic caused by Covid-19, in addition to presenting us with significant challenges in terms of caring for life, has made us aware of the many faces of suffering and injustice that exist in our world. Situations that, in one way or another, were already present, but which the pandemic has brought to the fore more sharply, and others besides that have emerged during this period. In regard to all this, Pope Francis said,

“We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat...are all of us.” (Pope’s prayer in St. Peter’s Square, 27 March 2020).

To set out, conscious of our need for one another, was the main call of the 22nd General Chapter: *let’s journey together as a global family!* At a time when protection measures seem to be separating and isolating us, new ways of feeling close and connected are emerging. Among these, digital means are currently playing a key role. Our spirit of hope is prodding us to be creative and motivating us to be innovative.

This is the context in which the initiative of an INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON THE LAY MARIST VOCATION is being launched in the Institute. It is a process that is intended



to take place over the next four years. Several of the stages will be carried out online, others in person. The process seeks to encourage us in WELCOMING, NURTURING, LIVING AND SHARING OUR VOCATION.

In my Circular *Homes of Light* I invited all of us to continue to grow in our experience of our Marist vocation as brothers and laypeople, following the invitation of the XXII General Chapter: “the future for the charism will be founded on a communion of fully committed Marists”. A number of initiatives are currently underway throughout the Institute that are focussed on strengthening each of these vocations, with elements specific to each vocation and elements common to us all. On this occasion, the focus of the INTERNATIONAL FORUM is the lay Marist vocation.

I would like to thank the members of the Secretariat of the Laity and the Extended Secretariat, as well as the facilitators, for their achievement in launching and assisting in the Forum process. Thanks also to all the formation teams serving lay Marists in the Provinces and Districts. My thanks to all the brothers and lay people who will be involved in this Forum movement. We believe it will be a life-giving experience for all.

We place the work of the Forum in the hands of Mary, our Good Mother, as well as our lives and mission, since *this Institute is her work*, as St. Marcellin so often reminded us. Mary inspires in us a heart that is free and full of the fire of God, capable of welcoming newness. With her by our side, let us journey together.

Fraternally,

Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General

Rome, March 2021

Introduction

Dear Brother Provincials and District Leaders, members of the Provincial and District Councils, Provincial and District Team members for the formation of Marist Laypeople, formation leaders in the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (CMMF) and other Marist lay groups and associations:

The Extended Secretariat of the Laity has chosen 19th March to launch the process of the **International Lay Marist Vocation Forum** because it is the date on which we celebrate the feast of St Joseph, the patron saint of Marists. Marcellin was deeply devoted to St. Joseph: *“Who, after Mary, could better express all that we feel than St. Joseph, that great saint!* (Letter 238). It also coincides with Pope Francis’ words of praise for him in the apostolic letter *“Patris corde”* where he dedicated this year 2021 to his devotion. He describes him as *“a beloved father, a tender and loving father, obedient and accepting; a father of creative courage, a worker, always in the shadows”*. For Marists, St. Joseph is the self-sacrificing spouse, the father committed to his family, an exemplar of humility and absolute generosity, the educator of Jesus together with Mary. For us too, he is an attractive model for the laity from whom we can learn a lot.

The convocation of this International Forum is the result of a long lay Marist journey: from the first steps of the Champagnat Movement more than 35 years ago and the appearance of a number of subsequent expressions of the lay vocation; passing through the recognition of the vocation of lay Marists by the XXI General Chapter (2009); the valuable documents that continue to guide us on our journey and which are the fruit of the shared reflection of many laypeople and brothers: *“Gathered around the same table”* (2009) and *“Being Lay Marist”* (2017) and others specific to



the CMMF such as the renewed “Project of Fraternity Life (2017); the organisation of various District, Provincial, regional and international meetings where we have reflected on the lay vocation; the creation of structures for the formation of laypeople in almost all the AUs and in the regions to create pathways for vocational growth; preparing lay leaders and formators to mentor others in their vocation in some Provinces; the current experience of some laypeople making formal commitments to the charism in some provinces; and examples of some kind of associative structure, as already exist in two provinces.

All the accumulated wealth of these years and the need to respond to the calls arising from the XXII General Chapter underscore the importance of engaging in a process of dialogue and discernment in the context of an International Forum. The Chapter stated that, *“The future of the charism will be founded on a communion of fully committed Marists”*, that *“We need new structures and processes that recognize*

and support our distinctive vocational paths as Marists” and that “Each Administrative Unit develops a plan for promoting different forms of Marist life, including appropriate strategies for formation, accompaniment and belonging ...”, among other declarations and suggestions. Further, initiative 2. 1.5 of the General Administration’s Strategic Plan is: “To explore and consolidate forms of commitment, ways of belonging and charismatic associations, to share related reflections and experiences; to continue working with various groups and structures, such as the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family”.

The Forum has as its motto *“Welcoming, nurturing, living and sharing our vocation”*, made up of four actions characteristic of vocational growth in which the Spirit, each person and the community interact, dialogue and walk together in an ongoing process of discovery and development. It aims to show the importance of each moment and how they fit together in a gradual process of discipleship that impels us to be men and women for others, to go forth, to be brothers and sisters at the service of all. They also remind us of the words of Br. Ernesto Sanchez in his circular *“Homes of Light”* where he invites us to care for life and to generate new life. A biblical quotation is attached to the motto, taken from the book of Joel, *“Your sons and daughters will prophesy”*, which reinforces the image of the future, of projection, of hope, of new generations who will continue Marcellin’s charism. It emphasises prophecy understood as announcing a better future in a visionary way, denouncing injustice and oppression, and committing oneself to be faithful to the love that comes from God.

The International Forum will be a process of dialogue and discernment to which all Administrative Units are invited and which will run over four years. Our intention is to provide answers to a series of questions being asked by lay Marists in different parts of the world and which we have expressed in four major objectives. The results we arrive at and the agreements or consensus we reach will also be important, as they will help us to take concrete steps to live our lay vocation in a more conscious and committed way in the coming years.

The Brazilian Archbishop Hélder Câmara, was a person of reference for many Christians in the world, a fierce defender of Human Rights, a four-time candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize and someone whose life gave clear witness of a Christian committed to his people. He had a beautiful thought that he often used and that can inspire us today for this journey that we are about to undertake together:

*“When you dream alone, it is only a dream;
When you dream with others, it begins to come true.”*

Our invitation to you is to dream with others, in a spirit of communion, in dialogue, in listening to the Spirit and to each other. To dream together so that sharing our vision of the future may itself be the beginning of what God wants for us. May this dream shared by thousands of Marists, lay people and brothers, help us to be what the Spirit is encouraging us to be: a Global Charismatic Family, united in the service of the Church and of all people.

Our Good Mother, Marcellin and so many brothers and lay men and women who have gone before us will be with us, sharing this dream, companions on our journey.

Fraternally,
Agnes Reyes, Manuel Gómez and Raúl Amaya
Secretariat of the Laity

1. Process Group

The General Government has decided that the Extended Secretariat of the Laity, the Link General Councillors for this Secretariat and the two facilitators will be responsible for the preparation, leadership, promotion and oversight of the International Forum. Their names are given below:



Raúl Amaya



Agnes Reyes



Manu Gómez



Ana Saborío



Elias Iwu, fms



Marcos José Broc



Carole Wark

▪ **Extended Secretariat of the Laity:**

Ms. Agnes Reyes (co-director), East Asia; Mrs. Carole Wark, Australia; Mrs. Ana Saborío, Central America; Mr. Manuel Gómez (co-director), Mediterránea; Mr. Marcos José Broc, Brazil Sur Amazonia; Br. Elias Odinaka, Nigeria; Raúl Amaya (Director), Santa María de los Andes.



Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa, fms



João Carlos do Prado, fms



Vanderlei Soela



Hno. Graham Neist, fms

- **Link General Councillors for the Secretariat:**

Br. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa and Br. João Carlos do Prado.

- **Process Facilitators:** Mr. Vanderlei Soela (Brazil Centro Norte) and Br. Graham Neist, (Australia).

2. Objectives

Our aim is to carry out a process of reflection and shared discernment among laypeople and brothers on the **vocation, formation and accompaniment, formal commitments to the charism and possible juridical structures** for Marist laypeople; relevant current and future issues related to the vitality of the Marist charism and growing in communion as a Global Charismatic Family.

The objectives we have set are the following:

1. To deepen our understanding of the **Marist vocation** with particular emphasis on the **lay Marist vocation**.

2. To review and offer **formation and mentoring processes and pathways** for laypeople to grow in their vocation.
3. To reflect on and propose **possible forms of bonding and belonging** to the Marist charism.
1. To know, reflect, explore and propose **possibilities of juridical structures (civil and canonical)** for Marist laypeople.

3. Major topics and questions to be addressed in the process

Below are series of questions that are associated with the objectives we want to achieve in this process. They can be described as the big inspirational questions that will guide us in our quest. At the end of this shared process of reflection and action, we hope to find answers to these questions, with everyone's contribution.

Activity sheets related to these questions will be sent to you starting from May 2021. They will contain more specific questions to be used for dialogue and discernment in the groups or communities.

Question 1

THE MARIST VOCATION AND THE LAY MARIST VOCATION

Objective 1: To deepen our understanding of the Marist vocation with particular emphasis on the lay Marist vocation.

1. How do we understand the expression MARIST VOCATION? What have been the most significant developments over recent years?
2. One of the expressions of this Marist vocation is its “lay face”. What do you see as the characteristic and non-negotiable features of the LAY MARIST VOCATION?
3. What is your understanding of the definition of the lay Marist as it appears in articles 11, 12, 13 of the document GATHERED AROUND THE SAME TABLE?¹
4. How do we grow in COMMUNION and CORESPONSIBILITY to strengthen our Marist vocation?
5. What things do we have to strengthen and develop for the future of the lay Marist vocation?

¹11. A third group of people exist who, after a personal journey of discernment, have decided to live their Christian spirituality and mission in the manner of Mary, following the insight of Marcelin Champagnat. These are we, the Lay Marists.

12. We Lay Marists are Christian men and women, who in the course of our lives have listened to the call of God to live the charism of Champagnat, and, from our lay state, we respond to it.

13. The initiative of our vocation comes from God. God loves us and wants our fulfilment, which is why God invites each one of us to follow a unique path. In this way, the lay Marist vocation does not originate as a necessity in moments of vocational crisis for the Brothers, or as a form of expressing friendship towards them. It is a personal call to a specific way of being disciples of Jesus.

Question 2

PATHWAYS AND PROCESSES OF FORMATION AND ACCOMPANIMENT

Objective 2: To review and offer formation and mentoring processes and pathways for laypeople to grow in their vocation.

1. What do you think about the existing pathways and processes of formation and accompaniment for lay people in our local areas, regionally and internationally?
2. What do you think of the document “Being a Lay Marist” as a guide to accompany people in their vocational growth and propose formation pathways?
3. What steps should be taken to stimulate the existence and to accompany the formation pathways and processes for lay people given the variety of contexts in our Marist world?
4. How can we initiate ways of exchanging ideas, adapting the best practice of others, and supporting initiatives between AUs on how to set up these formation and accompaniment pathways, which will involve having people and structures dedicated to providing a vocational, charismatic type of personal accompaniment?

Question 3

BONDING AND BELONGING TO THE MARIST CHARISM ²

Objective 3: To reflect on and propose possible ways of bonding and belonging to the Marist charism.

1. How do you understand the expression “bonding and belonging of laypeople to the Marist charism”?
2. What is the purpose of “bonding and belonging of laypeople to the Marist charism”?

3. What are possible forms of such bonding and belonging in relation to the different dimensions of the charism?
4. In what way could some possible forms be a visible sign of the bonding and belonging of laypeople to the charism?
5. What should be the necessary conditions for giving official recognition to the bonding and belonging of laypeople to the Marist charism?

2See the definition of VINCULACIÓN= bonding and belonging in <https://champagnat.org/en/proyecto-lexico/>

Question 4

POSSIBLE LEGAL STRUCTURES FOR MARIST LAITY

Objective 4: To know, reflect, explore and propose possibilities of juridical structures (civil and canonical) for Marist laypeople.

1. From the perspective of the future vitality of the Marist charism, why is there a need for some formal structure of association (civil and canonical) for laypeople?
2. What examples of associations, within the Marist world or beyond, church-related or civil (civil and canonical), may be sources of ideas in the framework of our reflection in this Forum on the lay Marist vocation?
3. What are some possible legal models (civil and/or canonical) that might provide a type of associative structure for Marist laypeople? What are the main features of each and what would be the consequences of each if adopted?
4. What impact would the existence of associative structures have on the vitality of the Marist charism?

4. Participants: characteristics

The invitation of the General Government is to all lay Marists throughout the world who are involved in some vocational process, members of the CMMF or other lay movements, Brothers involved in vocational accompaniment or who live out a spirit of communion between all Marists, brothers and lay, members of lay Marist associations, lay vocation pastoral teams and Provincial/District Councils to participate in the reflection and discernment of this Forum.

This process of reflection focuses on **the vocation of lay Marists, their formation and accompaniment, the possible forms of bonding and belonging and their organisation in some kind of structure.** It is a dialogue on the current reality of the Marist laity, its future and communion with the brothers in pursuit of a greater vitality of the charism. So, it makes sense that the participants in these conversations should be people who are engaged in their own vocational growth and who fit some of the criteria outlined below.

For those administrative units that do not yet have programs related to the lay Marist vocation, one or more groups of lay people and brothers who want to know more about the topic and participate in the process may be created.

The Lay Pastoral Team of each Administrative Unit will coordinate and organise the process and call people together, as suits their own context. The important thing is that all AUs feel invited and that they can organise themselves according to their possibilities.

The members of the Extended Secretariat will be available at all times to support the Provincial or District Teams in leading the process.

- a) We would like participants from local and Province / District settings to be:
 1. Laypeople who **feel identified with the Marist charism** and who have

chosen to discern, deepen and nurture their vocation, reflecting the variety of lay Marists in the AU.

2. Laypeople who have **made a formal commitment to the charism**, those who are members of a Marist association, members of Marist lay movements such as the CMMF.
 3. Laypeople who **are in a vocational program in the Marist charism** and who are being accompanied by the relevant pastoral structures of their AU.
 4. Marist Brothers, **particularly those working with lay Marists in regard to their discernment**, accompaniment and formation.
- b) Regarding participants in the International Forum in Rome in November 2022, we would like:
1. Each AU to send two **laypeople and one brother**.
 2. These 3 people **to represent** the whole AU they belong to.
 3. Them to have **participated** in local and Province/District gatherings for reflection.
 4. A capacity for **dialogue and team work**.
 5. We suggest that they be **elected or nominated** by those participating in local and Province/District gatherings in a suitable open manner.
 6. This representation is for both the residential Forum of November 2022 and the online Forum of November 2024.
 7. In addition, some participants from the 2022 Forum will be asked to take part in online study groups to continue work on one or other of the chosen themes in the months that follow.



5. Phases

This path of reflection and discernment has several stages which will be characterised mainly by a participative process of dialogue, involving meetings in small reflection groups. The contribution of each person is needed to enrich the process.

For local meetings, we propose that existing lay communities (CMME, spirituality groups, other lay movements, etc.) stay as they are and become reflection groups for the Forum.

In the AUs where there are no lay communities, we suggest organising groups that are not too big so that they can adequately address the issues.

It is very important that Marist Brothers involved in the formation and accompaniment of the vocation of laypeople participate in these groups or communities.



LISTEN! I AM STANDING AT THE DOOR, KNOCKING (Rev 3:20)

Official start of the process and organisation within AUs:

MARCH 2021 TO JUNE 2021

This phase is the time to get to know the overall process of the International Forum and to organise the local and Province/District gatherings.



- a) The process of the International Forum officially starts on March 19, 2021, this guidelines will be sent to the UAs and communication spaces will be opened through champagnat.org and other Marist social networks that you can access.

Hashtags for the social media postings

#ForumInternacionalMarista / #MaristLayVocation

Link to connect with:

<https://bit.ly/lay-marist-vocation>

- b) From April 2021 onwards, directions, relevant materials and procedural details for the next steps will be sent to AUs.

- c) The Coordinators of Province Pastoral Teams for laypeople (or whoever is designated by the Provincial and his Council) will prepare a calendar and organise the process for their respective AU, according to the suggestions contained in the directions to be sent from April 2021 onwards.



HE WALKED ALONG WITH THEM (Lk 24, 15)

Local and Province/District gatherings: JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2022

This phase involves the study and discussion of the proposed themes, at personal and group level. The process envisages small groups, in person, where possible, or on-line. For more details on the desired characteristics of participants, see section 4 above. It is important to stress that each AU will schedule this phase according to what it can manage to program, which means that it is not necessary to spread it out over all the months allocated to this phase.



- a) Between July 2021 and May 2022 each AU is asked:

- To inform the AU of what the International Forum is all about.
- To arrange all participants into small discussion groups (communities),

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in person or on-line, according to guidelines provided by the Secretariat of the Laity.

- To use an open process to choose representatives (two lay people and one brother) to attend the International Forum. They will take part in the November 2022 residential event in Rome and in November 2024 on-line.
- Organise a Province/District forum or similar event, in person or on-line, to be attended by representatives from the local groups. Each AU organises this event according to its possibilities. The three representatives of the AU to the Forum will be commissioned on this occasion.

b) By 30 June 2022 the Province pastoral teams will send to the Secretariat of the Laity the final documents containing any outcomes of the local and Province/District gatherings and the names of the representatives.

WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED IN MY NAME... (Mt 18,20)

International Forum. 4 to 11 November 2022, in Rome

The purpose of the Forum is to gather the rich diversity of the Marist world together in an international meeting and, in this spirit of unity, to discuss the reports coming from all the AUs. We want to reach a draft of the global consensus or agreement on each of the objectives of the International Forum and develop new ideas for the consideration of the AUs.

a) Starting in July 2022, the Secretariat of the Laity will organise the reflection outcomes sent by the AUs. Preparatory work for the Forum will be facilitated such as the participants' registration, visas, and the mailing of program details to participants.

PHASE
3

b) The *first* part of the International Forum will take place from 4 to 11 November, 2022.

Arrival and welcome: 3 November

Departure from the conference centre: 12 November

Venue:

Casa di Esercizi Spirituali Nostra Signora Madre della Misericordia

Via di Monte Cucco, 25 – 00148 - Roma

Tel. 06.65.33.730/06.65.37.082

Fax 06.65.31.272

www.nsmadremisericordia.it

PHASE
4

SOMETHING NEW IS SPRINGING UP: CAN YOU NOT SEE IT? (Is 43, 19)

Analysis of the outcomes and proposals: DECEMBER 2022 TO JUNE 2024

In this phase, the aim is to continue the reflection and discussion of the themes chosen at the International Forum. For this purpose, during the Forum, on-line study groups will be formed with some of the participants of the International Forum and other invited persons. These groups will have virtual meetings to discuss the theme assigned to them and develop a concrete proposal to be presented at the on-line Forum in 2024. An on-line discussion area will be created (e.g. Microsoft Teams) where the work of all groups can be followed and receive input from all Forum participants. This phase may include consultation with the Province lay teams when necessary.

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- a) Definition of the study topics for the development of proposals for the On-line Forum - during the International Forum.
- b) Set up groups to study the proposals.
- c) Name reference specialists (experts on the subject) for each group, if necessary (December 22 - February 23).
- d) Work in the study groups for each topic (December 2022 – December 2023)
- e) Set up an on-line discussion area for all to keep everyone up to date and allow for ideas from all participants of the International Forum – from December 2022.
- f) Refining of proposals by the Secretariat of the Laity and consultation with specialists regarding their viability (civil and canonical implications) – January to June 2024.
- g) Discussion with the General Council – September 2024
- h) Preparation of proposals by the Extended Secretariat of the Laity for presentation and agreement at the on-line Forum.

I am making everything new! (Rev 21, 5)

On-line International Forum: NOVEMBER 2024

This is the phase of presentation, discussion and building consensus regarding the proposals of each study group with a view to coming up with an agreed proposal and presenting it to the General Council and subsequently to the General Chapter of 2025.

a) The *second part* of the International Forum will take place from 4 – 22 November 2024. This second and final part of the Forum will have the following characteristics:

- It will be on-line and hence no need to travel to meet.
- Participants will be the same representatives from each AU who attended the face-to-face Forum in November 2022.
- Will be held over three weeks.
- The plenary sessions of the on-line Forum will last for two hours on certain days of the week.
- Each person will have time for personal reflection during the second week of the Forum.
- Participants will be divided into work groups by topics.

b) The proposed process for three weeks are the following:

- Each study group will present its proposal (one group per day) (presentation and time for clarification).

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- Participants can give their ideas on the presented proposals in the common on-line discussion area.
 - The study groups refine the proposal under their responsibility using the ideas of the participants.
 - Presentation of the participants' ideas about the proposals and building a consensus on these.
- c) The Extended Secretariat of the Laity will use the results to prepare a final document to be presented to the General Council and to the General Chapter.



6. Regional contacts

For clarification and support in the various phases, the members of the Extended Secretariat of the Laity will be persons of reference for the Provinces and Districts in their region:

ARCO NORTE:

Mrs. Ana Saborío, América Central anasaborioj@yahoo.com

AMÉRICA SUR:

Mr. Marcos José Broc, Brasil Sur Amazonía marcos.broc@maristas.org.br

AFRICA:

Br. Elias Odínaka, Nigeria eliodinaka@yahoo.com

EUROPE:

Mr. Manuel Gómez, Mediterránea mjgomez@fms.it

ASIA:

Ms. Agnes Reyes, East Asia nesreyesmarist@gmail.com

OCEANÍA:

Mrs. Carole Wark, Australia carolewark1@gmail.com

For general information and communications related to the International Forum (social media and others), contact Raúl Amaya (ramaya@fms.it), Director of the Secretariat of the Laity.

7. Logo of the International Forum on the lay Marist vocation



INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON **THE LAY MARIST VOCATION**

WELCOMING, NURTURING, LIVING AND SHARING OUR VOCATION.
"YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHESY" (JOEL 3,1)

The logo for the process of the International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation was created by the Communication Consultants of the Marist Province of Brazil Sul-Amazônia. The Extended Secretariat of the Laity is very grateful for their support, creativity and time dedicated to this challenge, as well as their contribution of helpful ideas to other initiatives.

The logo has three main elements, which can be used as a whole, separately or in a reduced combination. These elements are an image, the title of our process and a slogan that includes the biblical quote from the prophet Joel.

In the image we can find different symbols that refer to the experience we want to have in the next few years:

- The spiral shape evokes the wind of the Spirit who energises our lives and spurs us to live our vocation more intensely, in a movement that goes from the centre outwards, and from outside inwards, in a dynamic that is never-ending.
- In the centre there is fire, passion and creative love. They are symbolised

in the warm colours chosen. It is another way of expressing the experience of the Spirit that we want to permeate the whole Forum process.

- Both the spiral and the typeface chosen for the expression “Lay Marist Vocation” suggest to us the idea of something done by hand, with time, with care. The image is thus humanised, revealing the imperfections of the human being.

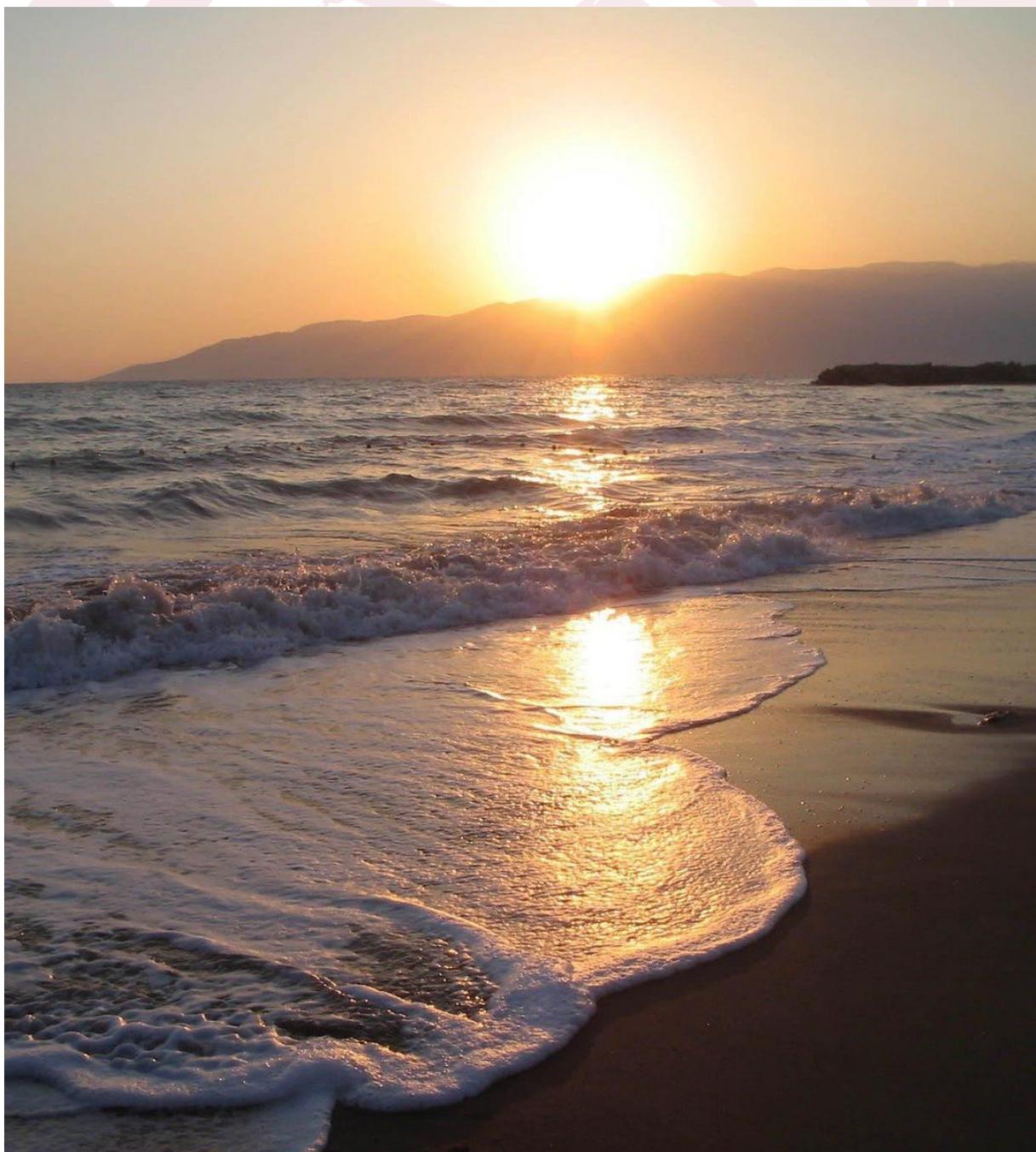


- We can also discover an ‘M’ at the heart of this spiral. This M in movement identifies us with the gift of the Spirit which is the Marist charism. It connects us with our history as Marists of Champagnat, since it is inspired by the M in the logo that was created on the occasion of the canonisation of Saint Marcellin in 1999.

- In today's historical moment, we want to visualise in an increasingly significant way new expressions of the Marist charism, which speaks to us of the feminine image of our God. It is not for nothing that the Hebrew term used in the Bible to indicate the presence of the Spirit is a word of feminine gender: *"la ruah"*.
- The overall movement visualised in the image resembles an embrace that rejuvenates from within, spiralling outwards again, to continue caring and inviting. In this infinite embrace we perceive the silhouette of a diverse group of people hand in hand, as if they were gathered around the table of fraternity. This diverse group of people is made up of laypeople and brothers in communion, coming from our different states of life, seeking to creatively develop Champagnat's charism.
- The intertwining hands are like points of connection that also speak to us of the reality of the global pandemic that we are living through in our days: social distancing has generated new modes of communication and expressing closeness through virtual connections.
- The image also brings to mind a dance, the dance of mission, which impels us to be prophets in today's world, in the dynamic of being a "Church on the move", in a "permanent state of mission".
- All these elements and dimensions are unified in our call as lay Marists to engage with the ongoing process of "welcoming, nurturing, living and sharing our vocation".

8. Prayer for the International Forum

We offer this simple prayer for use at different times during the International Forum. We ask everyone to join in as a Charismatic Family and entrust this journey to the Lord. This prayer can be used to open or close a community gathering or on any other suitable occasion.



God our Father-Mother,
You wanted St. Marcellin's life project
to be distinctive in expressing brotherhood and simplicity,
embracing a Marian and apostolic spirituality,
and having a deep love for young people.

Today, there are many of us Marists of Champagnat
who follow in his footsteps with audacity and hope,
who day by day enrich our distinctive vocations
as followers of Christ,
and who dream of a Marist future of being united
in the service of the Church and the world.

We know that in Your mercy
You make all things new (Rev 21:5)
and that we are all invited
to share at Your table as brothers and sisters.

We turn to You and entrust to You
the International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation.

We ask especially for Your blessing for the Marists
who participate in this journey of dialogue and discernment.
Help us in welcoming, nurturing, living and sharing our vocation.

Send us Your Spirit so that we may know how
to read the signs of the times,
to discover the ways in which you want to lead us,
to value our diversity, recognizing that
each of us is a dwelling place of the Spirit of Your Son Jesus,
to respond faithfully to Your calls
and to grow strong as Global Charismatic Family.

Amen.

Mary, Our Good Mother, pray for us.
St. Joseph, our protector and guide, pray for us.



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Marists
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