



Year of Marist Vocations

Caring for and Generating Marist Life



20 May 2022 - 6 June 2023



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



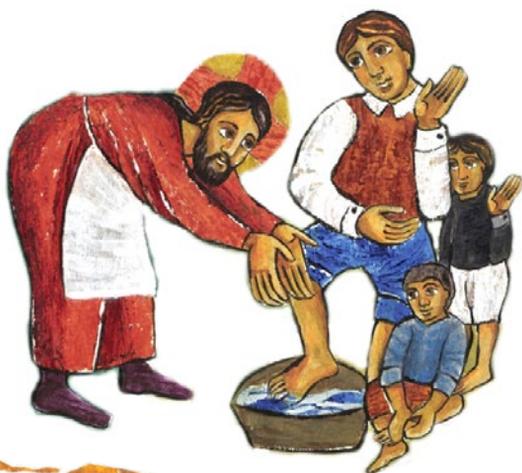


Dear Maristas of Champagnat

Last June 25th, in my letter to the Provincials and District Leaders, I announced the Year of Marist Vocations. I expressed it in this way: “we propose that the Institute dedicate a year to take up the theme of Marist vocations again with vigour and enthusiasm through promoting a renewed

culture of vocation. The proposal is to carry it out from 20 May 2022 to 6 June 2023.

These dates bring to mind the history of our origins when there was an impressive surge in vocations between 1822 and 1823, after the great vocation crisis suffered by the Institute just a few years after its beginning. Marcellin’s experience 200 years ago, with great faith and trust in God and Mary, can be a key point of motivation for this initiative”. I encourage all the Administrative Units to reflect and make a





plan to live this year, being a Global Marist Family, as a time to strengthen our identity and charism. We would like to offer our witness and visibility to the new generations. We would like to accompany young people in reflecting on their own vocation at the same time making known the possible ways to live Champagnat's charism in our days, as brother or as lay Marist.

I thank the Secretariat of Brothers

Today for preparing and offering to the Institute these reflection, orientation, and suggestions. The Provinces and Districts are invited to adapt these guidelines to the context of each country and the different realities. I thank each one of you for welcoming this initiative and for your commitment to the Year of Marist Vocations.

Fraternally,

Br. Ernesto Barba, Superior General

2 January 2022





Introduction

Vocation can be understood as a call to happiness and a project of life in plenitude. This is God’s will, communicated through the action of the Holy Spirit, that invites every person to a life of love, communion, and wholeness¹. Pope Francis adds that this call includes the ‘the call to life, the call to friendship with him, the call to holiness’². To be Marists of Champagnat – Brothers and lay men and women – is a way of living our Christian vocation by sharing in the charism

that was first given to St. Marcellin Champagnat³ and uniting us into a global charismatic family.⁴

We celebrate the Year of Marist Vocations as a ‘time of God’s favor’⁵ from 20 May 2022 to 6 June 2023. Dedicated to “Caring for and generating Marist life”, it coincides with the 200th anniversary of the resurgence of vocation to Marist Brotherhood in 1822⁶. Furthermore, it carries a message of hope as it also occurs within the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

1 Constitution and Statutes, no. 64

2 Pope Francis, “Christ is alive”, No. 248

3 Const., no. 3.

4 Ibid, no. 6.

5 2 Corinthians 6:2.

6 From 1819 to 1821, only three (3) young men asked to be admitted to the novitiate. (Furet, Life of Joseph Benedict Marcellin Champagnat)



In this booklet, the Secretariat of Brothers Today, in the name of Br. Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, and his Council, hopes to provide answers to two fundamental questions: What is the Year of Marist Vocations all about? What is our source of inspiration for the Year of Marist Vocations? We will also give some orientations and suggestions about how to animate it, both in the global and local levels, thinking not only of this year but beyond.





A What is the Year of Marist Vocations all about?

When the 22nd General Chapter⁷ asked us to be a global charismatic family that is a beacon of hope in this turbulent world, it also invited us to:

- a. Rediscover the original passion that inspired us to be Marists⁸.**
- b. Promote and nourish the diversity of Marist**

life⁹ and recognize and support distinctive vocational paths¹⁰.

c. Encourage the vocation of young people¹¹ .

The Constitutions direct us to cultivate a “culture of vocations” in our communities and places of ministry by giving witness to the joy of living as a Marist, in

⁷ The 22nd General Chapter was celebrated in Rionegro (Colombia), approximately 40 km from Medellín, in September 2017.

⁸ Message of the 22nd General Chapter, Call no. 1.d.

⁹ Ibid, Call no. 1.b.

¹⁰ Ibid, Area C, As Marists of Champagnat, no. 4.

¹¹ Ibid, Area A, In our Vocation as Brothers, Suggestion no. 4.



consecrated life and in other life options¹². Similarly, in Chapter 3 of his circular, “Homes of Light: Caring for Life, Generating New Life”¹³, Br. Ernesto invites us to re-imagine our culture of vocation. Recognizing the many brothers and laypeople who passionately live the gift of the Marist charism, he challenges us to create opportunities for showing the Marist charism in action and talking about its continuing relevance. In other words, we are to share the gift that the Spirit made available through St. Marcellin Champagnat. Furthermore, the Rule of Life opens with the statement, “There



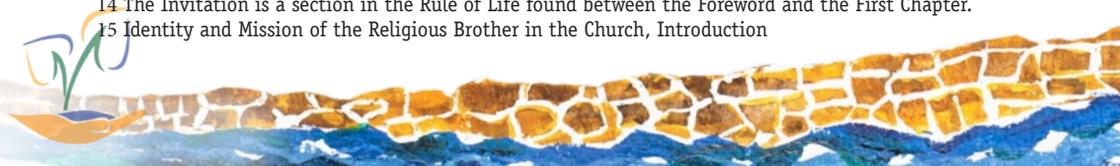
is great value in being Brother today”¹⁴. It is an invitation to reaffirm the ‘value and necessity of [the brother’s] vocation’¹⁵.

¹² Const., no. 65

¹³ “Homes of light. Caring for life. Generating new life”, is the title of the first Circular of Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, published for the whole Institute on Tuesday, September 8, the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady.

¹⁴ The Invitation is a section in the Rule of Life found between the Foreword and the First Chapter.

¹⁵ Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church, Introduction





1. Rediscovering the original passion that inspired us to be Marists

To bear witness to the continuing relevance of the Marist charism, first we must rediscover the

original passion that inspired us to be Marists. Thus, the Year of Marist Vocations is an opportunity for every Marist brother and laity to reflect on, further appreciate, celebrate, and talk about his/her unique vocational history.

2. Promoting and nourishing the diversity of Marist life and recognizing and supporting distinctive vocational paths

The Year of Marist Vocations, significantly different from “Year of Vocations”, is not only about the vocation of the Brothers. Through the years, many lay men and women have claimed as their own our Marist charism. As sharers of it, they are co-



responsible for its ministry¹⁶. Hence, Brothers and laity should help each other nourish their respective ways of living the response to the call.

3. Encouraging the vocation of young people

We must make a fresh effort and invest more energy into making the gift of the charism more visible¹⁷, believing that the Holy Spirit continues to inspire vocations today¹⁸. The Year of Marist Vocations is a time for Brothers and laity to extensively get involved in fostering vocations to Marist life among young people¹⁹. Our first mission among young

people is to help them discover the meaning of life. They are waiting to be shown the way to use their God-given gifts to be visible signs of God's love, compassion, and mercy, especially towards those who are suffering, poor or in need²⁰.

4. "There is great value in being BROTHER today."

Brotherhood is a prophecy. When Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 23:8, "You are all brothers", he pointed to the common dignity and fundamental equality of all believers.²¹ The vocation of the Brother is part of the answer that God gives to the

16 Br. Sean Sammon, "What is the future of religious life in the vocation crisis?" September 02, 2015.

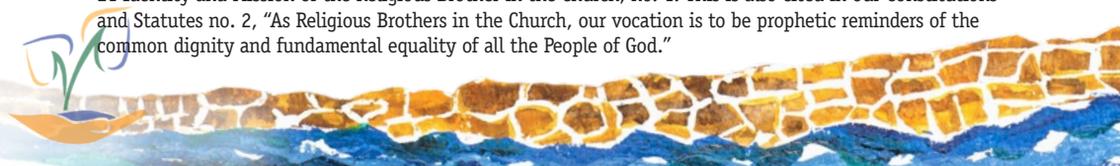
17 Br. Ernesto, "Homes of Light"

18 Pope Francis, "Christ is alive", No. 274

19 Message of the 22nd General Chapter, Area A, In our Vocation as Brothers, Suggestion no. 4.

20 Const. no. 64

21 Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church, no. 1. This is also cited in our Constitutions and Statutes no. 2, "As Religious Brothers in the Church, our vocation is to be prophetic reminders of the common dignity and fundamental equality of all the People of God."





absence of brotherhood which is wounding the world today²². The heart of the identity of the Religious Brother is fraternity which is a gift that is received (mystery), a gift that is shared (communion) and a gift that is given away (mission).²³

Marcellin Champagnat would say, “We need brothers!” every time he saw children and young people

needing to encounter God and find meaning in their lives. Today, more than ever, we are facing a parallel reality.

We firmly believe that God continues to inspire new vocations to the Marist brotherhood in our days. Thus, we must not get tired of promoting brother vocations even if in some parts of the world it has been a while since there

²² Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church, no. 6.

²³ Ibid., Chapter 2, The Identity of Religious Brother: A mystery of communion for mission.



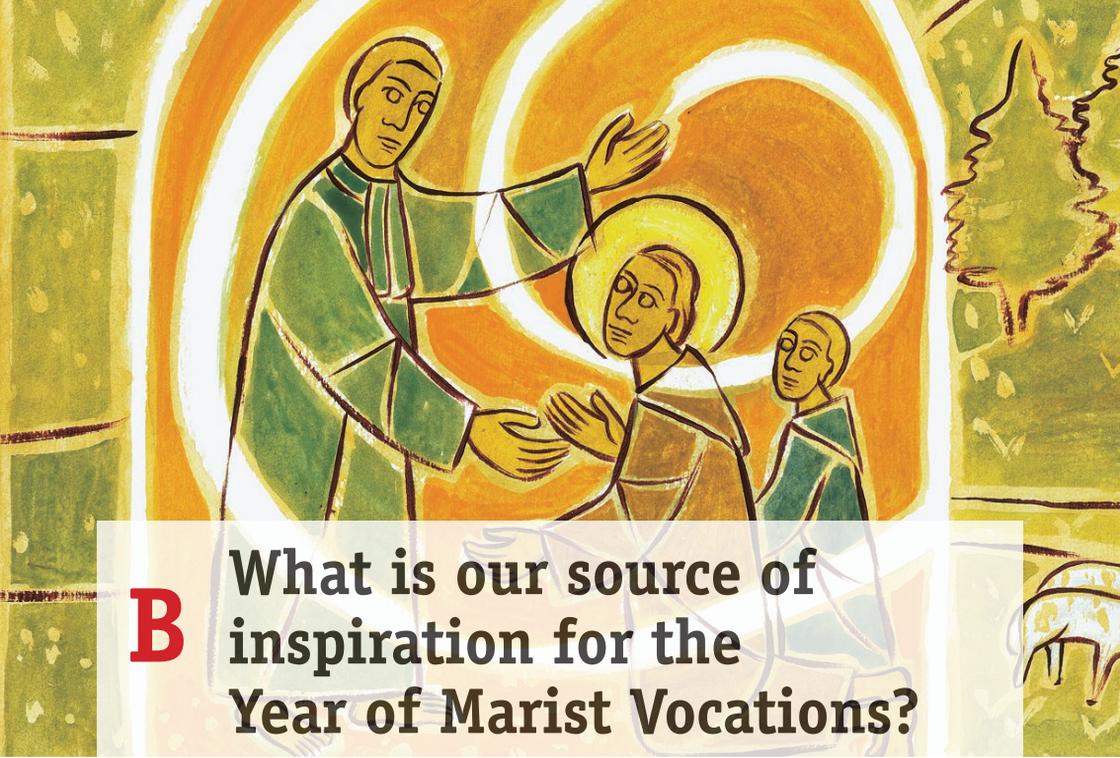
were any; while in others, they have been very few.²⁴

During the Year of Marist Vocations, we do not just wait for young men to come. Rather, we go to them, and we create spaces

for them to consider becoming Marist Brothers. We help them realize that it is in discerning and following God's plan that they will experience the joy of living their life to the full.

²⁴ Homes, Chapter III, no. 6.





B What is our source of inspiration for the Year of Marist Vocations?

The Year of Marist Vocations is inspired, among others, by our Constitutions and Statues, the Rule of Life, and the Conclusions of the 2015 Colloquium on Initial Formation²⁵. The circular Homes of Light, meanwhile, guides us in charting the course for all that we hope to do and achieve.

1. Homes of Light

Lighthouses of Vocation

All of us are invited to reflect on our personal experience of the call, on Mary's example of responsiveness, on our calling to live the spirituality of the heart, and on the vocation of Marcellin and our early brothers. In doing

²⁵ The Marist International Colloquium on Initial Formation took place on October 4-14, 2015 in l'Hermitage, France.



so, we become lighthouses for others who in turn are empowered to shine their light as we help them discover their vocation.

2. Caring for Life

Caring for Vocations

We celebrate our vocation in and with the community, renew our

efforts to care for our vocation and those of others, discover and put in place new structures that care for vocation, make the care of the environment an important part of our response, and work at deepening our relationship with God in prayer and in living our spirituality.



3. Generating New Life Generating New Vocations

We attract vocations by the witness of our lives while making our presence more significantly felt among young people. Each one recognizes and accepts his/her responsibility for vocations ministry and does his/her part in nurturing the men and women in formation to be brothers or lay Marists.

4. "Not really extraordinary things..."²⁶

Br. Ernesto gives us ideas for Vocations Ministry, which in his words seem ordinary and common, (see chapter 3, no. 7). Similarly, our Constitutions and

Statutes tell us that Vocations Ministry should be a priority in every administrative unit, that all involved in it should have the required formation and training, that promotion of Marist vocations should be part of the community life plan, that we give young people opportunities to immerse in a vocational culture, and that there is harmonious working relationship among Marist vocations ministry, youth ministry and initial formation²⁷.

5. Tending new shoots of Marist life²⁸

The Year of Marist Vocations is symbolized by a plant shoot in the gardener's hand. With it

²⁶ Homes..., Chapter III, no. 7.

²⁷ Statutes 65.1-5

²⁸ Homes..., Chapter III, no. 7.



the catchphrase, “Caring for and generating Marist life”.

New growths in plants are very delicate and therefore need utmost care. The same is true with our vocation, our Marist life. It must be tended attentively. At the same time, we must sow the seeds if we want the garden to flourish.

The stalk shaped like an M – for Marist and for Mary – is colored green to signify life. The two leaves represent Marist Brothers and Marist Laity.

The leaves are heart-shaped, proclaiming our love for the charism. However, they are not in the usual upright position, indicating the inquietude of the comfort zone and the restlessness

in the face of emerging needs.

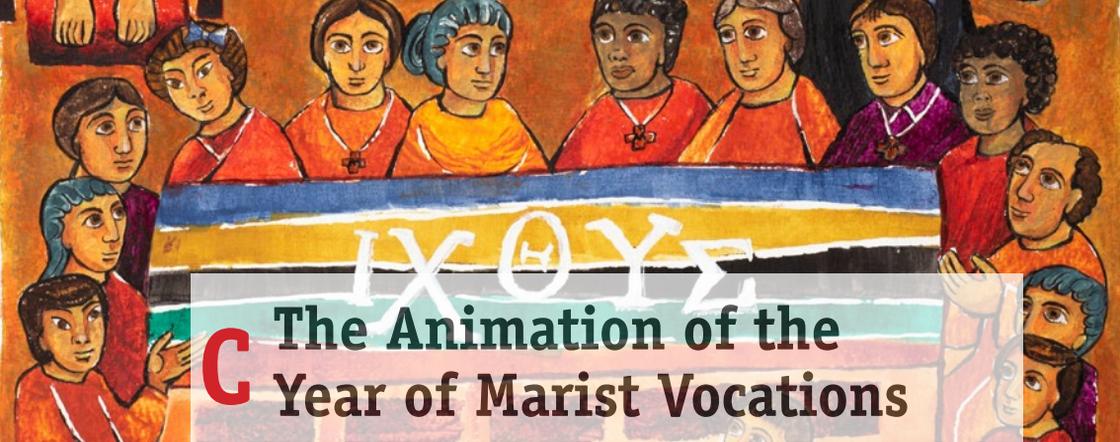
The vibrant colors blue and orange speak to us of the rich variety of ways in which we respond to the call, according to our respective gifts. Blue characterizes fidelity to our commitment. Orange, on the other hand, suggests ardor and reflects our passion for Marist life.

The hand and the lump of soil that supports the shoot paints a picture of caring, whether it is for the seedling, or for the sprout. This is a reminder of our responsibility to nurture Marist life – our own, that of our companions on the journey and that of those who are just beginning.









This section gives a list of projects, activities, and initiatives for the Year of Marist Vocations. Some are new; some are reinforcements of what we already have. Some are concrete actions; others, more of suggestions

and orientations. In any case, we leave it up to the respective regions, administrative units, ministries, communities, and groups to adapt, contextualize, improve and build upon what are enumerated here.



**LAUNCHING ON MAY 20, 2022,
AND CULMINATION ON JUNE 6, 2023**

INSTITUTE

REGIONS / AU / MINISTRIES

**COMMUNITIES
/ GROUPS**

Institute-wide
Launching and
Culmination Activities
will be organized in
the level of the General
Administration

*All Provinces and Districts are invited to mark the
launching and the culmination with some activity, e.g.,
Liturgy, Recollection, Webinar, Forum, etc., considering
the respective circumstances, contexts, realities, etc.*



GOAL 1

Rediscovering the original passion that inspired us to be Marists

OBJECTIVES

1. To revisit our Marist story and heritage
2. To reflect on, further appreciate, celebrate, and talk about one’s unique vocational history
3. To deepen the sense of being a global family and further develop the global mindset

INSTITUTE	REGIONS / AU / MINISTRIES	COMMUNITIES / GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop topics on Marist vocation (e.g., videos, podcasts, webinars, etc.). • Encourage more visits to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Champagnat.org b. Facebook Page FMS Champagnat c. Twitter FMS Champagnat d. Face Book Page FMS 20May (for formation houses) e. Others • Promotion of the Rule of Life • Sharing Stories of Vocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retreats, Recollections, Days of Reflection on the theme of Marist Vocations • Designate a day of the month as “Marist Vocation Day” • Promotion of the Rule of Life • Gatherings to share Stories of Vocation • Regional Formation Program for Vocation Animators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Community Prayer that integrates the theme of vocation, to reflect on and share one’s vocation story <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Designate a day of the month as “Marist Vocation Day”



INSTITUTE	REGIONS / AU / MINISTRIES	COMMUNITIES / GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All On-Going Formation Programs will be organized and conducted from the perspective of Marist vocations. a. Senderos / Mid-Life b. Acompañantes / Mentors c. Third Age d. Gier e. Regional Program for Vocation Animators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jubilee celebrations • Online Meetings for sharing or reflecting together among, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Young Brothers b. Community Leaders c. Other Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration of the vocation of each brother and lay Marist • Remembering and honoring those who have been part of our vocation story



GOAL 2

Promoting and nourishing the diversity of Marist life and recognizing and supporting distinctive vocational paths

1. To help each other nourish their respective ways of living the response to the call

INSTITUTE	REGIONS / AU / MINISTRIES	COMMUNITIES / GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Forum of the Marist Laity Vocation • International Course for Laity Formators • Publication - FMS Message 51: The Vocation of the Brothers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint formation activities • Each AU is invited to set up structures and resources for vocational ministry: teams of Brothers and laypeople working in programs and processes of human, Christian and vocational Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of the Year of Marist Vocations in the Community Life Plan • Revisit documents such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gathered Around the Same Table, b. Circular of Br. Charles Howard on Vocations, c. Rekindling the Fire, d. Marvellous Companions, e. FMS Message 2005, f. etc. • Sharing vocational experiences among Brothers and Lay people • Support for and participation in joint formation activities



INSTITUTE	REGIONS / AU / MINISTRIES	COMMUNITIES / GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication – FMS 53: The Vocation of the Marist Laity • A section on the website about the Year of Marist Vocations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit documents such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gathered Around the Same Table, b. Circular of Br. Charles Howard on Vocations, c. Rekindling the Fire, d. Marvellous Companions, e. FMS Message 2005, f. etc. • Sharing vocational experiences among Brothers and Lay people in the different levels (e.g., community, associations, ministry, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening the communities to welcome Marist laity groups <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Share life b. Pray together c. Gather at the same table • Commitment of each brother to be present in the activities of the school or ministry



GOAL 3

Encouraging the vocation of young people

1. To obtain a fresh understanding of the Culture of Vocation and commit to build it
2. To extensively get involved in fostering vocations to Marist life among young people
3. To empower young people to make life choices geared towards building a better world

INSTITUTE	REGIONS / AU / MINISTRIES	COMMUNITIES / GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a Network of Vocations Animators • Regional Formation Programs for Vocation Animators • Development of Topics (e.g., videos, podcasts, webinars, etc.) such as <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Young People Today b. New Approaches to Vocations Ministry c. Vocation Culture d. Safeguarding of Children e. Care of the Common Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation and updating of current vocation ministry plans • Identifying, encouraging, and training brothers and laypeople for full-time or part-time service in vocation ministry • Production of contemporary vocation promotion materials and resources and using various media • Connecting with other religious congregations and with dioceses in vocations work • Participation in the local phase of the World Youth Day 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praying the Prayer for the Year of Marist Vocations • Designate a day of the month as “Marist Vocation Day” • Personal accompaniment to all young people who are interested and, particularly, to those who want to discern their specific and, in some cases, Marist vocation. • Integrating Vocation Culture in the community life plan



INSTITUTE	REGIONS / AU / MINISTRIES	COMMUNITIES / GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing connection among candidates and aspirants Promotion of the Volunteering Project Include Marist Life in the Champagnat Global section of the website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Topics on Marist Vocation (e.g., videos, podcasts, webinars, etc.) Developing a Post-Year of Marist Vocations Action Plan Establishing Vocation Centers in the places of Marist ministry Inviting other congregations, institutes, persons living particular lifestyles, etc. to share about themselves Creative expressions on the theme of vocations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing young people opportunities to experience a profound encounter with God Venues for listening to and dialoguing with young people Creative expressions on the theme of vocations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Posters Music, songwriting Prose, poetry Videos Visual arts Others



GOAL 4

“There is great value in being BROTHER today.”

1. **To intensify our efforts to promote the vocation of the Marist Brother in our places of ministry and in new territories**
2. **To create spaces where young men can consider becoming Marist Brothers**
3. **To ensure that candidates and young men in formation are taken care of and encouraged**

INSTITUTE	REGIONS / AU / MINISTRIES	COMMUNITIES / GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Topics on Marist vocation (e.g., videos, podcasts, webinars, etc.). • Establishing connection among formation houses. • A process of renewing the Formation Guide that involves as many people as possible across the Institute and considers the different realities that they are living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation and updating of current vocation ministry plans • Widening the geography of our vocation promotion activities • Sufficient formation and training of those in Vocations Ministry • Gathering of parents / families of the brothers • Regional Formation Colloquium • Contextualization, translation of materials / resources on the vocation of the Brother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and reflecting on the Constitutions and Rule of Life together in community • Know by heart the Vocation Ministry Plan of the administrative unit • Talking to and welcoming young people • Distribution of materials about the Marist Brothers



INSTITUTE	REGIONS / AU / MINISTRIES	COMMUNITIES / GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proclaiming our Marist Saints and Martyrs and promoting the process of postulation • Giving prominence to news about Brothers profession and renewal of vows, jubilee celebrations and the commitments of Lay people to the Marist Charism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocation Symposium • Development of Vocational Topics (e.g., videos, podcasts, webinars, etc.) • Visuals: Posters, banners, wall painting, etc. • Highlighting news of professions, vows and jubilees • Directory of Formators and Formands / Formation Houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know and visiting the parents / families of brothers and formands in the same locality • Knowing, visiting, welcoming candidates and formands • Forms of support to formands as part of the community life project • Praying for formands, with the help of the Directory of Formation Houses





Conclusion

We know that Marcellin Champagnat always had a special place in his heart for children and young people, especially those who are poor and uneducated. As Marists of Champagnat, our hearts are burning with an apostolic passion like his and our way of participating in the mission of God is by responding to the needs of our world today²⁹. We engage ourselves in serving children and youth, especially those who are most excluded and vulnerable³⁰. Our response to the emerging challenges facing humanity today, for example, poverty, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and many more, is inspired by the sensitivity of Marcellin to the needs and suffering of others³¹.

Marcellin taught us that this project is not ours, but Mary's. She has done everything for us from the very beginning. Therefore, she will not

29 Const., no. 52

30 Const., no. 56

31 see Const., no. 59



allow that ‘this work should perish’. We know in our Marist story how Marcellin exemplified his great ‘faith in God and not in human means.’

The Year of Marist Vocations will be a year of renewed effort to proclaim our being “gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, [and] a grace forever relevant to the world”³². This comes with the hope of attracting more people to “come, see, stay”³³ and be part of this journey of following Christ as Mary did. May the joy and hope we share as Marists of Champagnat motivate young people to hear the voice of Jesus and commit themselves to follow Him³⁴.

*“Love your vocation, be faithful
and steadfast to the end, with courage.*

*May the Good Mother preserve you,
give you increase and bring you to holiness.”*

St. Marcellin Champagnat

32 Const. no. 11

33 John 1.39

34 see Const., no. 54





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.
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 men and women you have chosen
and enable us to accompany them
in nurturing their Marist vocation.*

*Inspire them 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.

*There is great value in
being Marist today.*

caring for and generating

MARIST LIFE

YEAR OF MARIST VOCATIONS

20 MAY 2022 - 06 JUNE 2023



Institute of the Marist Brothers
Secretariat Brothers Today
2 January 2022