



## WORKHEET 1: READING AND REFLECTION MATERIAL

In this first worksheet, we offer you the necessary material for reflection. We invite you to read it calmly, serenely and deeply. What are they telling us today?

### 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER: CALL ONE:

1. Global charismatic family, a beacon of hope in this turbulent world. Jesus, today you continue to call us to relate to others in a fundamentally new way (Mk. 3:20-21; 31-35), to listen to your word and to put it into practice with urgency and without exclusion. You push us to walk the paths of the future:

- To build homes of light as Marists of Champagnat, involving ourselves with passion in the creation of a family lifestyle that is open to all.
- To promote and nurture Marist life in all its diversity, enlightening a new and enriching vision as a “global body”.
- Privilege simplicity, openness and availability beyond geographical or provincial boundaries.
- To rediscover as brothers the original passion that has moved us to be Marists.



During the General Chapter, the expression global body was repeatedly used as a synonym for global family. That is, that all Marists of Champagnat belong to one body or one charismatic family, and that we are called to act as such. Mark's gospel reference in this call is the scene in which Jesus responded with the concept of the family of God: “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother” (Mk 3:34-35).

Reference is used from Br. Emili's letter “Lavalla-Casa de la Luz” - (March 2017), where he compares the house of La Valla as a lighthouse: a reference point in the middle of the night to navigate safely and be able to arrive happily in port.

This theme developed further into the idea that the light of this house allows us to illuminate the faces of others and thus recognize the face of Christ in each person, regardless of race, region or religion. By recognizing the face of Jesus in each person, we are truly one global family in Christ. The faces of Jesus are slightly different to convey that the call to imitate Christ is given through a personal response according to our own capacity and strength. We are not called to rigid uniformity.

The lighthouse has the Marist cross as a light to illustrate that we see the world through the light of our own charism. The Marist charism is also echoed in the symbol on the side of the lighthouse, which is an Australian design to reflect the cross, as well as the five horizontal lines re-



presenting the main elements of our charism: Presence, Simplicity, Family Spirit, Love of Work and Mary's way. The water is slightly turbulent, but the door of the lighthouse is open to all, inviting all the people who make up the family of God. The light shining through the partially open door also forms the letter 'L' to remind us of our own lighthouse: La Valla.

## 2. ONE HEART ONE MISSION

### MESSAGE OF THE FIRST MARIST INTERNATIONAL MISSION ASSEMBLY

MENDES 2007, SEPTEMBER 3 - 12

#### AT THE HEART OF OUR MARIST DREAM

As representatives of all the Provinces and Districts of the Marist world, brothers and lay men and women gathered in Mendes, Brazil, to participate in the first International Marist Mission Assembly. We listened to the Lord, to the voices of the children and we listened to each other. We shared from the heart our desire to work together to shape our dreams. At the center of these dreams, Jesus manifests himself to us as the son of Mary and the risen Lord.



**Un  
Corazón  
Una  
Misión**

Asamblea Internacional  
de la Misión Marista

We have heard his powerful voice manifesting itself to us at the heart of our mission: listen to your own heart; listen to your inner voice. Here is the center; here is Jesus.

Jesus Christ is in the heart of each person who hears the call and responds. We find him in our midst, in our communities. Filled with his love, we experience a burning desire that unites us in a passion to serve and proclaim the Kingdom of God. We have heard this call to holiness. As St. Marcellin responded, we too follow Christ like Mary. We have been won over by the powerful image of Mary giving birth to Jesus, which urges us, too, to give birth to Jesus with maternal tenderness.

In each one of us are the eyes and ears, the feet and hands, the heart of Jesus. We contemplate him in the eyes of children, in the faces of the young people to whom we minister in our educational and social works, and we hear his voice in the cry of those we have not yet met (Mt 25:34-40).

Christ the Redeemer from Corcovado, with his open arms, sends us to embrace the children and young people of all the dioceses of the world, as Marcellin dreamed.

With Jesus at the center of our dream and with the image of Champagnat holding Jean-Baptiste Montagne, we imagine a future that integrates the following five elements:

#### A REVOLUTION OF THE HEART: OPENING OURSELVES TO THE BREATH OF THE SPIRIT

As Marists we are called to passionately center our lives in Jesus Christ, developing a spirituality of discipleship. Inspired by Mary, we make living with children and young people the privileged place for our encounter with God. As apostles of the 21st century, we carry out our mission in new areopagi. Our educational and social works and insertion communities are sacred spaces for conversion. Together with children and young people, we listen to their needs and heed God's call. We feel challenged to focus our spirituality on evangelizing, liberating and prophetic action, respecting different cultures.

Our mission, shaped and informed by our rich spiritual heritage, will require transformative experiences that develop our different and complementary vocations. This requires:

1. Specific and joint formation of brothers and laity at the provincial, regional and international levels.

2. Developing new resources and sharing existing ones to support training activities and programs, especially in those parts of the Institute most in need.
3. Study of the Marist spiritual patrimony through the documents of the Institute and the Church.
4. Promotion of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.
5. Personalized accompaniment and vocational follow-up for brothers and lay people.
6. Creation of new spaces of participation, in addition to the existing ones (such as the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family or the Marist Fraternities) that promote our way of living the Gospel of Jesus, with a sense of belonging.

## MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT ON A SHARED MISSION

As Marists of Champagnat, we believe that God is now calling us to share life and mission, in co-responsibility, men and women, in a spirit of trust, understanding and mutual respect.

## VOCATION

1. We believe that God calls brothers and lay people to follow and share Marcellin's charism in different ways, according to personal vocations.
2. We feel called to promote a new Marist vocation ministry and a joint formation to deepen our common vocation and our specific vocations.
3. We wish to encourage new forms of attachment to the Marist charism, so that lay people and brothers can hear the call to live their identities.
4. We need to articulate the future of the lay Marist vocation and its organizational structures.

## MISSION

1. We are called to work together in a radical way to announce the Kingdom of God to all children and young people, especially the poorest, creating spaces for:
  - sharing life and developing different forms of community life
  - discernment
  - the management
  - decision making
2. We need to create new structures and processes to strengthen our co-responsibility, respecting the diversity, tradition and customs of each culture.
3. To share the mission, we need to make joint decisions, creating new instances of representation at the Provincial, Regional and General Administration levels.
4. We wish to establish channels of communication to build communion by learning from the different experiences of shared mission, new projects and networking.

## MARIST PRESENCE IN EVANGELIZATION

As brothers, lay Marists in communion, we affirm that evangelization is the center and priority of our apostolic actions, proclaiming Jesus Christ and his message. Therefore, we feel called by God to have audacity in:

- Evangelizing through the integration of faith and life, and the promotion of dialogue between different cultures and religions.
- Understanding and learning from youth cultures and utilizing current processes and content, particularly life experiences, that liberate and empower.
- Committing to our formation in a transformative education of young people and families so that they live and proclaim the Gospel as agents of change.
- Promoting human and Christian values for social transformation and renewing our works to make them more evangelically fruitful.
- Engaging with the poor and excluded at every opportunity.
- Being leaven and promoting a welcoming, participative, evangelical, prophetic and fraternal Church, where we are willing to develop and share the Marian dimension.
- Creating Marist communities of life that visibly and significantly evangelize by their family spirit and commitment to mission.

## MARIST EDUCATION: NEW CHALLENGES

We recognize in the document “Marist Educational Mission” a necessary frame of reference in our educational task, and we are grateful for the dedication of so many people throughout Marist history that inspires us to respond to the needs of today’s children and young people in creative fidelity to God’s calls. At this time we wish to emphasize in a particular way the right to education: an evangelizing education, an education committed to solidarity and social transformation, attentive to cultures and respect for the environment, and an education without discrimination that creates spaces for those who lack it.

### WE FEEL CALLED BY THE LORD TO:

1. Complete the process of evaluation of works, throughout the Institute, according to the criteria of evangelization in the educational center and the “Evangelical Use of Goods”.
2. Transform our educational works so that brothers and lay people accompany our children and young people in such a way that they become committed persons in the construction of a more just and supportive society.
3. To move, in significant numbers, to the places where the excluded live, creating educational presences where the right to education of children and young people is not respected.
4. Promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue, based on respect, mutual growth and equal relations between different cultures and religions.
5. To promote a new educational work to be carried out in Marist networks, local and international, and with other organizations: governmental, civil and ecclesial.

### DEFENSE AND PROMOTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH: GIVING A VOICE TO THOSE WITHOUT A VOICE

1. We believe that God is calling us to be a strong, determined and prophetic voice for the defense and promotion of the rights of children and youth. This requires:
2. Ensuring that the principles of the Church’s Social Doctrine guide our actions (structures, policies and behaviors).
3. Promoting human rights through a critical, integral, solidarity-based Marist education, inspired by the Gospel, in all our works and social projects.
4. Denouncing courageously the social, economic, political, cultural and religious structures that oppress children and young people.
5. Becoming witnesses to the defense of rights through our personal, community and institutional life.
6. Opening our hearts to the call of the children and young people of our world and promoting a greater Marist presence in the poorest regions, accompanying the least favored.
7. Encouraging opportunities for our recipients to share, participate in decision making and invite children and young people to be leaders in this area.
8. Creating or strengthening Marist networks of collaboration and communication, respectful of cultural diversity, with civil society, the legislative branch, the government and ecclesial institutions at the local, national and international levels.

*Mendes, 12/09/2007*



### 3. VOICES OF FIRE

#### MESSAGE OF THE SECOND MARIST INTERNATIONAL MISSION ASSEMBLY

NAIROBI 2014, SEPTEMBER 16-27



#### PREAMBLE

About 150,000 years ago, through the work of God the Father, the first human being arose in this African land and, in the course of history, grew and multiplied, set out on the move and set out for new lands. It crossed valleys, deserts, mountains and oceans. A diverse humanity was born and all the regions of the planet were populated.

150,000 years later, the Creator Spirit arranged for some of them to return to the African land to begin a new beginning. This Spirit called us, as Marists of Champagnat, to celebrate the 2nd International Marist Mission Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya. It brought us together in the diversity of our vocations (lay, laity, sisters and brothers), of our languages, nationalities and cultures, of our histories and ages. In this African land we have been able to contemplate with joy and hope the youth and vitality of those who incarnate the Marist charism. We are stimulated and encouraged by their desire to respond in a meaningful way to the challenges expressed in the faces of the children of this beautiful and welcoming continent. It has been especially meaningful to be able to celebrate this Assembly on the African continent which, hit hard in this time of crisis, provokes us to resituate the center from which we focus OUR life and mission.

We have recognized the centrality of Jesus Christ in our lives and we have felt sent by Him to be evangelizers and missionaries. We have accepted Mary's invitation: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). Hand in hand with Mary, we have heard in our hearts the invitation to continue to respond to God's calls as she did, and to shout out loudly the prophecy of her Magnificat. Like her, we want to live an attitude of total availability before the new situations that emerge in our world in continuous transformation.

As in a new Pentecost, the Spirit has made its fire burn in our hearts and has impelled us to dream of new horizons for a greater vitality of the Marist charism. It has made us vibrate to the rhythm of the drums and has set us on the road towards the new Montagnes of our time. In a context of changing times and paradigms, we strongly felt the need to change our perspective, to look through the eyes of poor children and to learn to do so with God's gaze of tenderness and mercy. And it has also awakened among us a deep spirit of communion that we see reflected in two

African proverbs: "If you want to go fast, walk alone; if you want to go far, go with others" and "I am because we are" (UBUNTU). This spirit of communion has infected the whole Marist world, and we have experienced it through the closeness, communications and prayer of so many people who have walked with us from their communities of origin.

In communion with our local Churches and with the whole universal Church, the words of Pope Francis resonated in us in a special way: "Each Christian and each community will discern which path the Lord is asking of it, but we are all invited to accept this call: to leave our own comfort zone and dare to reach out to all the peripheries that need the light of the Gospel". (EG 20) "I hope that all communities will strive to put in place the necessary means to advance along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion, which cannot leave things as they are. Let us constitute ourselves in all regions of the earth in a permanent state of mission." (EG 25)

On the eve of celebrating the bicentenary of the Marist Institute, we have imagined together a new story in which prophecy, mysticism and communion are the characteristics in which we recognize ourselves and are recognized as Champagnat's Marists. Taking up the legacy of the 1st Marist International Mission Assembly held in Mendes (Brazil), we have been called to be New Marists in Mission and we have tried to scrutinize the new expressions of the Marist charism on the horizon of the third centenary.

## OUR DREAMS

Our dream is that the Marists of Champagnat will be recognized as MYSTICS because:

1. We are evangelizers with spirit and we have been transfigured by God.
2. We are constituted as praying persons and communities that grow in humanity and make the face of God transparent.
3. We provide spaces and quality time to deepen the “being” that gives meaning to the “doing”.
4. We accompany and get involved in processes that lead to growth in interiority, spirituality and prayer.
5. We make visible the Marian face of the Church.

**Our dream is that the Marists of Champagnat will be recognized as PROPHETS because:**

We have abandoned our comfort zones, and we are in a permanent attitude of going out to the peripheries of our world, impelled to proclaim and build the Kingdom of God.

We went out with determination to meet the new Montagne and we are a significant presence among them and with them.

We promote the rights of children and young people and are a public voice for the defense of these rights in political and social forums where decisions are made and reflected upon.

We live an attitude of global missionary availability towards new ways of incarnated presence in the national and international peripheries.

We have made a courageous and decisive commitment for our educational works (schools, universities, social centers...) to be privileged platforms for evangelization in which an inclusive, critical, committed, compassionate and transforming education is promoted.

We accompany people and the processes of Marist Youth Ministry, where prophets and evangelizers emerge for our time.

**Our dream is that the Marists of Champagnat will be recognized as men and women who live COMMUNION because:**

- We have responded to the call of Jesus Christ to live the Gospel in Mary’s way.
- We constitute a charismatic family made up of new and diverse community expressions.
- We have generated processes and structures of accompaniment of Marist vocations that have led to new ways of bonding and belonging within the Marist charism.
- We have created new structures that effectively promote participation, co-responsibility and decision-making.
- There are international, intercultural and intercongregational networks of communities with a marked itinerant and missionary character.

## OUR CHALLENGES

On this road ahead over the next decades, we have perceived the following CHALLENGES in order to be more significant and we have posed BOTTOM LINE QUESTIONS that we invite ourselves to answer in the different local, provincial, regional and international instances:

- Generate the necessary processes to promote and accompany that sustains and nourishes life and mission.
  - *What is our relationship with the God revealed to us in Jesus of Nazareth? How do we make God transparent at the personal, community and institutional levels? What traits of Mary are we called to incarnate today? How can we be evangelizers with spirit? What paths must we follow to grow in contemplation and interiority? How can we foster a spirituality connected to the Earth?*
- Recreate the structures we need to serve a greater vitality of the Marist charism.
  - *What strategies, processes or structures can foster relationships of communion? What kind of structures do we need to accompany Marist life and mission and guarantee a greater closeness to children and young people? What does it mean structurally to function as an international Institute? How can we strengthen structures that can promote a continuous missionary availability?*
- Overcoming fears and resistance to go out to the peripheries and to promote and defend the rights of children and young people.

- *How can we go to meet the Montagne people who today urge us to rush to the peripheries of poverty and exclusion? How can we help them understand that a right of children and young people is to know Jesus Christ and his Gospel? How can we turn our educational works into spaces where the rights of children and young people are guaranteed? What plans and projects should we prioritize in order to commit ourselves to social transformation? How can we defend the rights of children in social and political instances?*
- To promote inter dynamics (internationality - interculturality - interreligiosity - inter-congregationality - inter-ecclesiality) that favor the Marist Mission in new lands.
  - *How can we cultivate a permanent missionary availability? How can we see diversity as an opportunity for growth? How can we mutually enrich each other? What networks can we use to serve these 'inter' dynamics?*

## OUR OPPORTUNITIES

With hope and joy, we have also recognized the following OPPORTUNITIES that will allow us to generate a greater vitality of the Marist charism and mission:

- The thousands of children and young people we serve in our mission.
- All the people already involved in the Marist life and mission.
- The validity and attractiveness of the Marist charism, an ecclesial expression of our times.
- The development of processes of growth and accompaniment of new Marist vocations.
- The charism of St. Marcellin Champagnat which is expressed in new forms of life, especially in the Marist laity.
- The thirst for spirituality and the search for meaning in our world.
- The experience of the Marist charism from a woman's perspective, which incorporates and integrates into our lives Marian elements such as tenacity, maternal tenderness, sensitivity for the 'little ones', attention to detail and intuition.
- The strength and sensitivity that we recognize in young people and in our Marist Youth Ministry processes. In them we discover the possible change and the face of the new evangelizers of the future.
- The potential of our Marist works and schools present in the five continents. All the accumulated history and experience, and the validity and relevance of the Marist educational and evangelizing tradition.
- The commitment of many Marists who already work with children and young people in situations of vulnerability and exclusion.
- Existing support and resources at the local, provincial and international levels.
- Solidarity and volunteer organizations and networks in the Institute in response to those who are the reason for our mission: the Montagnes of today.
- New technologies and social networks.

## CONCLUSION

We are deeply grateful to God for having given us the gift of this experience of encounter and communion at the 2nd Marist International Mission Assembly. Mary has been our companion along the way and has guided our steps. From now on we hope to be, with our life and witness, "like the fires that burn with so much desire that one cannot look at them without flickering, and whoever approaches them, ignites them" (Eduardo Galeano).

How beautiful and good all that is still ahead of us! Your brothers and sisters, New Marists in Mission!

***Nairobi - Kenya - Africa, September 27, 2014***

## 4. RECLAIMING THE SPIRIT OF THE HERMITAGE

### H. SEAN SAMMON FMS 2006

The year is 2024, two hundred years after the beginning of the construction of the Hermitage.

Marcellin envisioned this building as a large space that could accommodate a good number of brothers. What was beating in Marcellin's heart that led him to think big? Basically, the deep conviction that this was not a personal project, but a project of God and Mary. A home where the whole Marist family could come together. A place where the brothers could feel at home.

In building the Hermitage, the founder showed true leadership, he took a step forward, he took risks, he looked to the future. I write to you now to ask you all to do the same at this time.

### NOTRE DAME DE L'HERMITAGE

Of all the Marist places, however, the Hermitage is the one at the center of our story. Marcellin spent much of his life there. Within the walls of the house, and in the environment in which it is situated, the first generation of brothers gave shape and character to the Marist way of life and mission. This imposing construction that the founder and his first disciples left us as a legacy continues to be a source of inspiration for us today, due to the audacity of the project and the circumstances surrounding its realization.

At the Hermitage are the tomb and reliquary of the founder, as well as the graves of brothers whose names have become a familiar reference for all the generations of brothers and lay Marists who have come after them.



### NOTRE DAME DE L'HERMITAGE "LOOK TO THE ROCK FROM WHICH YOU WERE HEWN" (IS 51,1)

The history of Marcellin's Hermitage begins long before the first stone was cut. In his wanderings between La Valla and St. Chamond, the founder often passed by a piece of land in a secluded part of the valley of the Gier River, bounded on the east and west by a steep rocky outcrop rived in height only by the oak trees that rose in between. On May 13, 1824, he and Father Courveille went to the office of Mr. Finaz de St. Chamond and acquired that estate, which belonged to Mr. Montellier. It was an area of 206 acres, which they bought for 5000 francs, to be paid within one year, with an interest of five percent.

All the brothers were happy to help the master masons in the construction of the house during the summer vacation. To accommodate them, the founder rented an old farmhouse on the left bank of the Gier. He slept on an open-air balcony and the brothers rested as best they could in the old attic. Early in the morning, at four o'clock, they all gathered in a corner of the forest, which they had temporarily adapted as a chapel. And so the work began.

Marcellin Champagnat did more than construct a building in that valley; he also began to shape the character of the Little Brothers of Mary. He did so by throwing himself wholeheartedly into the work and organizing the first brothers to work alongside him and the few professional masons he had hired. For more than a year they stayed on the job site from sunrise to sunset, prayed regularly and shared an austere



lifestyle.

What did all this bring with it? A series of memorable events and stories, weaving together a tapestry of the spirit that surrounded the foundation: the visible protection of Mary; the daily Eucharist; the “forest chapel”; Marcellin and his brothers cutting the rock with energy and enthusiasm, while one of the group read aloud texts on spirituality; the simple meal; the night’s rest in the ramshackle barn.

These elements, added to many others, shaped the relationships of those young people and gave a unique form to our charism: FAMILY SPIRIT. With each passing day it became clearer what it meant to be Marist.

Looking back on the history of the building of the Hermitage, two things strike me. One, the intense pace at which the work was carried out. Another is that the construction plans were continued throughout the life of the founder. The fact that he and the first brothers were able to finish the first building in little more than twelve months (from May 1824 to August 1825), despite the scarcity of means and the few skilled masons involved, is not negligible.

There was further work at Notre Dame de l’Hermitage during Marcellin’s lifetime. Sections of the interior of the house were renovated, for example, the bedrooms, and parts of the first building, including the chapel, were demolished. In 1827 a bakery was installed and stables were built. In 1836 a new chapel was built, and the following year the kitchen was renovated.

At this moment, and with this historical perspective, it is up to us to reclaim and make our own the spirit in which the Hermitage was built. Those who worked there were men of bold dreams and daring actions, their hearts were full of fire. They took risks, of course. But what they accomplished, with such meager means, should move us to do the same. The thirty-three years that Marcellin and François led the Institute from the Hermitage represent an intense period in our history, a time that helped to uniquely shape our charism and forge our family spirit as a group.

As we stroll through the Hermitage, we feel the mysterious presence of Marcellin and our first brothers in the walls of the buildings, in the paths along the banks of the Gier and in the rocks so close to the house.

How can one spend time in this sacred place without feeling the call to reclaim - for oneself, for the brothers and lay Marists, for our communities and works, for the young people we are called to serve - the love those men had for each other and their enthusiasm for the mission, their ability to live joyfully in the presence of God, their trust in Mary and their tireless dedication to proclaiming the Good News among the neglected children and young people of their time?

