
Marist presence and servant leadership

“How much people are helped by a word of thanks or appreciation of thanks or recognition, especially if it comes from the leader”.

(Marist Voices, chap.2 - Br. Ernesto Sanchez)

Alberto Libera
Responsible for mission
Provincia of Santa María de los Andes, Bolivia



I am a member of a fraternity of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family. I have been a teacher, director general and now I have been called upon to take on the role of animator in the mission of my Sector, my Province, and the Region of South America.

My connection with the Marists surfaced in 1979, when as a teenager, I entered the Marist school of Santa Cruz as a student. There, thanks to the Marist Brothers, I discovered the dream life that would identify my whole life. The Marists helped me to find reasons to live and offered me the possibility of getting to know Jesus and his Gospel through youth ministry. From then on, my life moved along diversified paths, but always permeated by the desire to serve and to pass on Gospel values.

That is why I believe that the servant leadership of Marists must aim at three fundamental objectives:

- To find meaning in what we do, to live our leadership as personal fulfilment, as a sense of life and as a service so that others (young people, teachers, administrators, the educational community as a whole) find in the Marist work a space that helps to give meaning to personal existence, to have a reason to live. It is a calling for every Marist leader to have a life project.

This, no doubt, requires the conviction that what we do is something good, that our mission is intrinsically good.

- I also believe that Marist leadership requires generating community. In the midst of a society that moves between the extremes of individualism and the amorphous, uncritical mass, Marist leadership needs to foster a sense of community; the experience (and not just the talk) of community as a way of being and doing. A community that is growing stronger, that, with simplicity, transmits values to its surroundings, and a community that is a witness to the Kingdom of God.

- The third important element for Marist evangelical leadership is to find Jesus and to help others find Jesus. For me, the encounter with the Lord has been fundamental. We are called, as Father Champagnat asked, to help children and young people encounter Jesus, as well as our co-workers, our mission partners, our families, and society as a whole--to have that joyful encounter with the Lord.

May our families and our educational communities be the witness of the family of Nazareth and may our constant commitment be to build the Kingdom of God.

I have lived these three inspirational lines with two attitudes that have helped me a lot: trust and openness to growth.

Trust is expressed in an attitude of welcoming the suggestions of the Brothers and those responsible for the Mission. I have assumed with a spirit of trust (and I could say docility), the





different tasks that have been entrusted to me over the years. I have had to take on various responsibilities, but I have never doubted the support of the superiors and the help of the Holy Spirit.

And I have had an openness to grow, expressed in a personal desire for constant formation of heart, mind, and spirit. And I have also been committed to the integral formation of my colleagues and mission partners. Without constant formation, we can make little progress. The world is continually changing and requires us to be able to understand it better in order to faithfully transmit the gospel values, science, and culture.

Dear Marists of Champagnat, I want to encourage you to follow Marcellin's dream, to breathe new life into your hearts and your daily tasks and to ask yourselves often: What more can I do to enrich my mission and my being Marist?



The opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Marist Institute.

If you would like to share your ideas, reflections, or experiences about servant and prophetic leadership with the Commission as a result of these reflections, write to fms.cimm@fms.it

