



INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON THE LAY MARIST VOCAATION

STAGE II
July 2021 - June 2022

WELCOMING, NURTURING, LIVING AND SHARING OUR VOCATION. Formation and mentoring

Sheet 2 / 2

ITINERARIES AND PROCESSES OF FORMATION AND MENTORING - SHEET 2 / 2

WE CARE FOR OUR PROGRESS IN MARIST LIFE

ANNEX 2

SPIRITUAL ITINERARY

[LEXICON PROJECT \(www.champagnat.org\)](http://www.champagnat.org)

Itinerary (from Latin *itineris* = journey, and *itinerarius* = about a journey) is the description of a path or route, which mentions places, stops, and situations that can be found along the way. It is also the route to follow in order to reach a destination¹. The process a person must undergo to reach a certain place seems to be the most important nuance of the term. *Road*, *path*, and *way* are similar words, and the person who undertakes an itinerary is a *walker*, an *itinerant*, a *traveler*, or a *pilgrim*. An itinerary involves a motivation that generates movement, and it “always implies a starting point or initial situation, a path to be followed through different places and circumstances, and a final destination. A journey takes time, and its duration depends on the speed, the travel means, stops, goals, and obstacles found on the way. You can also get lost, change paths, or quit for various reasons”². Person and itinerary are closely interrelated. On the one hand, itineraries provide the necessary information for the person to follow them, knowing that he or she will do so at a particular pace and using specific skills; on the other hand, the person will turn the itinerary into a unique and unrepeatable experience, although other people have undertaken it before.

¹ Taken from the *Royal Spanish Academy* dictionary, and Wikipedia.

² Arrieta, Lola: *Itinerarios en la formación. Pistas para el camino del seguimiento de Jesús*. Cuadernos de formación permanente Frontera Hegian N° 56, 2007, Editorial Frontera, Vitoria, España.

Itineraries should include the following information: destination, and an outline of the road to follow (where you are at, and where you should go); a description of what you can expect (spots of interest, stops, landscape features, possible obstacles and difficulties); means of transportation you could use (by foot, bicycle, horse or vehicle); estimated time for each stage and the entire route; costs and items you should bring with you or buy on the way; and how to face the contingencies you may find. In addition, travelers should be aware of their real motivation to undertake the itinerary, besides having enough self-knowledge regarding their physical and psychological condition, their attitudes and skills, and their personal history in this kind of context.

From a spiritual perspective, an itinerary is a walk of discipleship, a path to follow Christ, a journey to seek God as the Apostles and first disciples did. We cross this way, which is in direct relation with the ways of the human existence, moved by the Holy Spirit's company and inspiration. Living in the Spirit implies fidelity to the words of Jesus, to his actions that heal and set people free. Ultimately, it implies letting the Spirit of Jesus gradually forge and transform us, so that we can help transform the world through our faith in Christ.

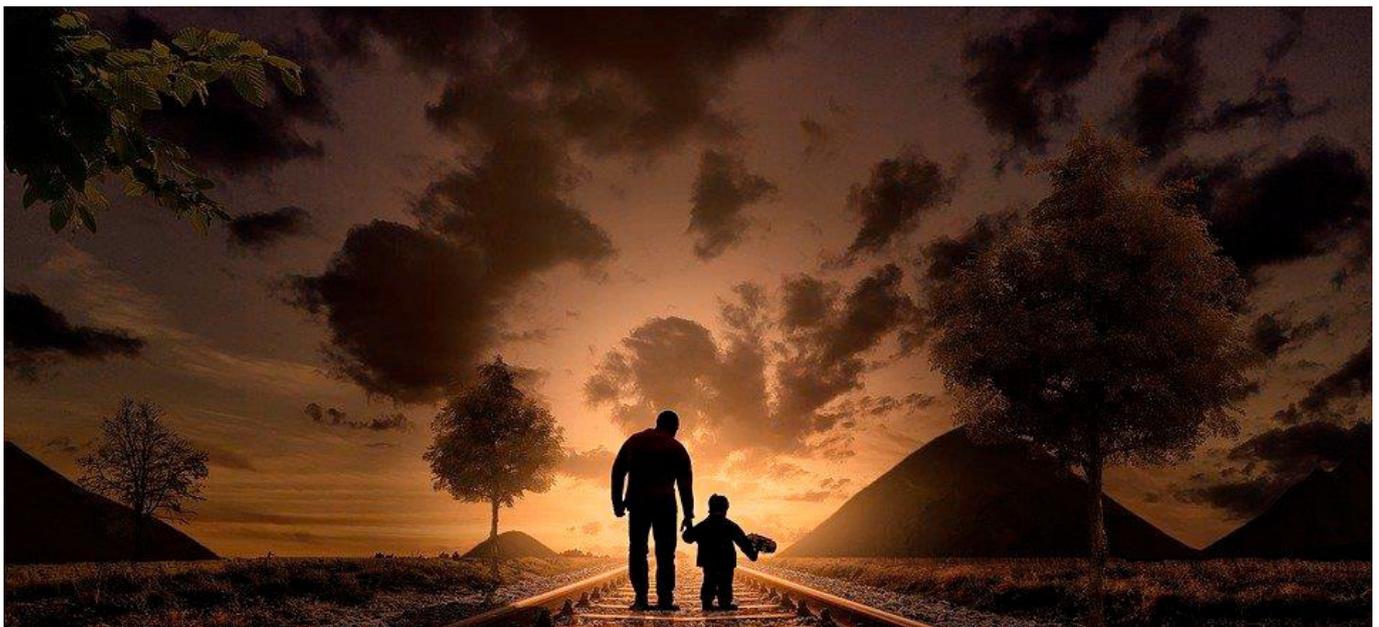


A spiritual journey, which seeks to live according to the Spirit, necessarily includes our relational world. *"Spiritual journeys always lead us beyond our horizon, hence the metaphor of walking forward. They display the same dynamics as human development: we are born, grow, develop, and die. In this moving forward, we always find incentives and obstacles. The key to moving forward consists in transcending oneself, going beyond our own points of reference. Forward motion is the core of itinerancy"*³. Our life is fuller, more complete, only when we share it with others and become a source of life for them. This is the community dimension of a spiritual journey. Therefore, we can say that spirituality shapes our life in a concrete way, according to the criteria and the example of Jesus, and becomes visible in our day-to-day life: study, work, relationships, community life, friendships, decisions, etc.

³ Arrieta, Lola. Op. cit.

There are different spiritual itineraries in the Church. For us, Marists, the spiritual journey should consist in following Jesus in the style of Mary – the First Disciple – and of Champagnat and the first Brothers. Our great challenge therefore, is to keep learning from them and their spiritual journey, which is a Marist landmark showing us how to move towards Jesus. Our Marist spirituality highlights Mary's presence in a particular way, since she *"inspired in the first Marists a new vision of being Church which was modelled on that of the first Christians. This Marian Church has the heart of a mother: no one is abandoned. A mother believes in the goodness at the core of a person, and forgives readily. We are respectful of each one's personal journey. There is a place for those with doubts and spiritual uncertainty, a place for all. There is listening and dialogue. Challenge and confrontation are done with honesty and openness"*⁴.

⁴ *Water from the Rock* 114.



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