



INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON THE LAY MARIST VOCATION

STAGE II
July 2021 - June 2022

WELCOMING, NURTURING, LIVING AND SHARING OUR VOCATION.

Sheet 3
Bonding and belonging

BONDING AND BELONGING TO THE MARIST CHARISM - SHEET 3

LINKING TO THE MARIST CHARISM GIVING LIFE TO OUR VOCATIONAL COMMITMENT

Introduction

"Belonging is an answer to some lay people's vocational process, which asks for an official acknowledgment from the Institute and the Church. A life project consisting in following Jesus through the Marist charism has deep meaning for them. The essence of their lay Marist vocation is their bonding to the charism, which in some cases involves a desire of belonging to the Institute or having a formal link with an association" (from [Lexicon Project, no.4 Bonding and Belonging](#)).

The desire of people who take the step of bonding to the charism is to respond to what they sense as a call from God. And by doing this, to feel in closer relationship with other Marists, to join forces with them, to represent a global charismatic family, to speak with a common voice in the Church, to lead processes to revitalize the charism and to keep alive Champagnat's vision, with a lay face, in communion with the Brothers.

B. Drawing on our experience

Let's look at a series of images (in the attached document) that express different bonds that we have as human beings (with other people, with institutions ...).

- What kind of bonds can we recognise in them?

- Can we name other kinds of bonds that exist in our society?

To continue the sharing ...

- What are the "bonding" experiences that you have lived or continue to live?
- What do these experiences mean to you?
- Why did you take that decision to bond?

In the light of faith

"Bonding to the Charism" is something new in our Marist family. So far there are lay men and women who have taken this step in Norandina, Santa Maria de los Andes and Iberica. Others are considering whether to take this step. Each province has different forms of belonging but all with the same purpose: to give those lay men and women who so desire and who have been accompanied by the provincial team through a vocational process, the opportunity to publicly express their commitment to the Marist charism – seeking to be builders of the Kingdom of God, in the way of Mary, in which ever setting they find themselves (family, social, work ...), within Marist works and outside of them. For these lay men and women it is a way of expressing the maturity and solidity of their vocation.



Below, you will find two documents in the annexes:



a) A group of lay men and women from the Iberia Province share their experience of linking to the charism> This was published in www.champagnat.org on May 5, 2016 (<https://champagnat.org/en/second-celebration-of-lay-linking-to-the-marist-charism/>).

b) A document from the Marist Lexicon Project (<https://champagnat.org/en/to-be-marist/laity/lexicon-project/>) on Bonding and Belonging.

We invite you to read them and then share your reactions.

The following questions may offer a guide to your sharing and discussion. Feel free to add your own:

- What strikes from either of the documents?
- What new insights are there for your own personal journey or for your understanding of linking to the Marist charism?
- What do you perceive as the personal or communal challenges posed by these testimonies?

The documents can be found as an annex to this exercise.

My experience of faith goes by way of the heart

After sharing in community, we take a little time of silence – maybe 5 minutes – to treasure what resonates most in my heart.

I remember the beginning of the meeting, savouring life, the listening to and sharing something of our personal stories. Also the reading of the inspirational text and our sharing as a believing community.

Of all this, what do I treasure in my heart? What do I discover as the living Word of God?

I thank, I praise, I ask ... the Lord.

I read in silence the text from the gospel of John, 15:4

That speaks of the deep bond between Jesus and the disciples, like the vine and the branches, a relationship that generates good fruit

"Remain in me as I remain in you"





D. Personal, community and province calls

In this part, it is important that a secretary records the ideas expressed. The notes will be very useful for the final synthesis meeting.

Having listened with the heart to my personal experiences of bonding to something and the reflections generated by the testimonies of the experience of the Iberica Province, we share the responses that arise in us from the following questions:

- What is our understanding of the expression “linking of lay people to the Marist charism”?
- “Bonding to the Marist charism” – for you, what might it mean and what impact might it have at the level of the
 - a) individual, b) community and
 - c) province / district?
- What would be the necessary conditions for a bond to the charism to be institutionally recognized in your province or district?



E. We offer the Lord our shared experience

1. Hymn

To begin this moment of prayer, the community chooses a hymn which evokes unity, bonding, belonging.

GATHER US, O GOD / EN TU LUZ VIVIREMOS (JÉSED)

Gather us, O God.
Body, spirit, soul and mind.
Gather us, O God.
One in union now with you.

unión ahora contigo. / Te rogamos, Padre, / en unión
con Cristo, / que seamos uno para que el mundo crea.
/ Tú nos amas, / Padre como amas a Cristo / Él nos

[YouTube](#)

Reúnenos, oh Dios. / Cuerpo, espíritu, alma y mente. /
Reúnenos, oh Dios. / Uno en



da tu amor que mora en nosotros. /
Oh, Señor, Tú eres luz y en ti no hay
tinieblas, / caminando en tu luz so-
mos uno en ti. / Como tú estás en la
luz en tu luz viviremos, y la sangre de
tu Hijo, nos purificará.



2. Reading

We read together the following text from the Gospel of John:

Juan 15, 4 - 10

"Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.

By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love."

The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ

We take a short time of silence to spiritually savour the words of the Gospel and hold them in our hearts ...

3. Thanksgiving

We take time to recall moments when God has been present in my life, through different persons or situations, moments that have strengthened the bond to him, moments that have borne fruit for others, for myself.

Each one shares some of these experiences of bonding and gives thanks to the Lord for the blessing this has meant. Thank you, Lord!



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"YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHECY" (JOEL 3,1)



4. Final prayer

We draw our gathering to a close with this prayer of offering that strengthens our close bond to the Lord. He is forever present in our life.

An offering to Presence

Lord, here we are before You.
We put our faith in You, knowing You will not betray us.
We entrust ourselves to You because you love us.
Lord, today we want to say YES:
to everything You want to tell us,
to everything You want to give us,
to everything You want to ask us.
We entrust our mind to You, fill it with Your thoughts.
We entrust our will to You, fill it with Your wishes.
We entrust our feelings to You, fill them with Your works.

We entrust our life to You, fill it with Your living.
Amen



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