



INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON THE LAY MARIST VOCAATION

STAGE II
July 2021 - June 2022

WELCOMING, NURTURING, LIVING AND SHARING OUR VOCATION.

Sheet 4
Legal structures

ITINERARIES AND PROCESSES OF FORMATION AND MENTORING - SHEET 4

POSSIBLESIBLE LEGAL STRUCTURES FOR THE LAITY

SHARING OUR VOCATION AS A CHARISMATIC FAMILY

A. Introduction

The convocation of the International Forum is the result of a long lay Marist journey: from the first steps of the Champagnat Movement more than 35 years ago and the emergence of a number of subsequent expressions of the lay vocation; passing through the recognition of the vocation of lay Marists by the XXI General Chapter (2009); the valuable documents that continue to guide us on our journey and which are the fruit of the shared reflection of many laypeople and brothers: “Gathered around the same table” (2009) and “Being Lay Marist” (2017) and others specific to the CMMF such as the renewed “Project of Fraternity

Life” (2017); the organisation of various district, provincial, regional and international meetings where we have reflected on the lay vocation; the creation of structures for the formation of laypeople in almost all the AUs and in the regions to create pathways for vocational growth; preparing lay leaders and formators to mentor others in their vocation in some Provinces; the current experience of some laypeople making formal commitments to the charism in some provinces; and the possibilities of creating some kind of associative structure.

The document “Gathered around the same table” encourages us on this journey:

134: Although the important part of our relationship is found in free interpersonal communication, there exists also, among Brothers and Lay Marists, an institutional dimension. Thanks to the rich process carried out in these last decades, the moment has arrived to encourage new structures that will allow the deepening of that institutional relationship even more.

140: All Christian vocation is born in and for the Church, and it is for the service of the world. For that reason, our vocation of Lay Marists, like that of the lay men and lay women who are attracted by other foundational charisms tend to be recognized by the ecclesiastical community.

142: Other people and groups feel the need to request recognition from their Marist province of their vocation to the Institute or the diocesan Church. But there also exist those who, experiencing the Marist vocation as their own, do not believe this recognition to be necessary

143: We are experiencing a moment of creativity which is interesting and complex. In some provinces new forms of welcoming the lay vocation are being carried out. We should discern together, Brothers and Lay people, the best ways to channel the vitality that is growing. The articulation of the initiatives instigated by the provinces will contribute to consolidating this recognition.



In this meeting we invite you to share precisely on this topic: possible legal structures for Marist laypeople. What we want is to open the dialogue, generate reflection on this issue and allow you to contribute your dreams and opinions. We know that we have a long way to go and that this reflection will continue for some time, remaining attentive to whatever the Spirit may wish to propose.

B. Drawing on our experience

To begin, let's do the following exercise together:

Putting together the puzzle:

On a large table, there should be an envelope or box. Inside you will find several irregular pieces that when put together make up an image. You are invited to

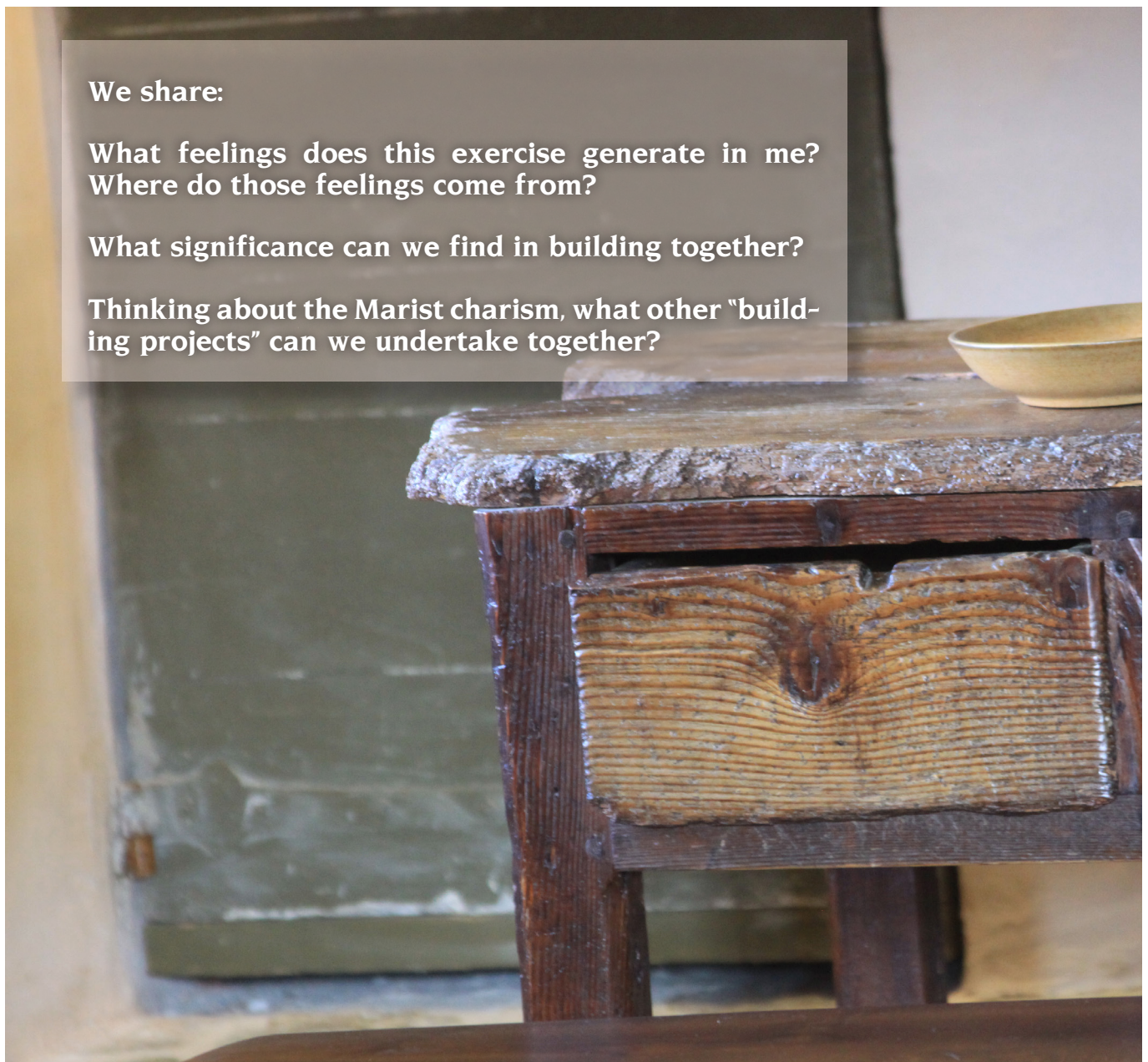
put this jigsaw together. Once finished, discuss the exercise. Look at the image that has appeared in silence for a few minutes. Consider what you have accomplished together. Then we share what we feel, what the exercise provokes in us, what we observe.

We share:

**What feelings does this exercise generate in me?
Where do those feelings come from?**

What significance can we find in building together?

Thinking about the Marist charism, what other "building projects" can we undertake together?





C. In the light of faith

Today, many Marist lay men and women experience a strong desire to belong to and make commitment to a Marist associative structure.

For these lay men and women, belonging to an associative structure would make explicit their commitment to the vitality and future of Marist life. The person would assume with greater force the commitment to develop the charism (mission, spirituality, shared life), in creative fidelity, as a lay person, within the Church and in communion with other Marists - lay and consecrated Brothers. There would be a stronger sense of being disciples and missionaries, sent out to bear fruit. And this implies a certain interior freedom to assume possible leadership or other services, develop

formation possibilities, accept co-responsibility, live in community, promote communion, be open to the international dimension of a global charismatic family and contribute to fidelity and creativity in mission.

An associative structure could assure stability and allow a future-focus. It could encourage initiatives to live and share Champagnat's charism and pass it on to future generations.

In the following documents, you will find three different experiences of lay legal structures from other Catholic congregations that might contribute to our reflection. They are presented as examples, not necessarily as a model of what we should do. As well, there is the section on "Association" from the Lexicon Project:



1. Annex 1: Piarist lay movement
2. Annex 2: Lasallian Association
3. Annex 3: Salesian Association
4. Annex 4: Association, Marist Lexicon Project

We invite you to read through the texts, individually and together, highlighting whatever catches your attention or challenges you in some way. After the reading, the most important thing is to leave time for deepening and sharing.

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

- What feelings arise in you from reading and sharing the different experiences presented? What causes those feelings?
- What strikes you most from the experiences presented?
- What do they contribute to your understanding of the idea of a possible legal structure for Marist laypeople?

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.

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 Matthew 7, 24- 25

that suggests to us that Jesus is the rock on which we build our life and our projects.
Rains, storms and the winds may come; it will always remain solid.
(I can repeat it several times, as I would a simple mantra).

We build our house on rock.

D. Personal, community and province calls

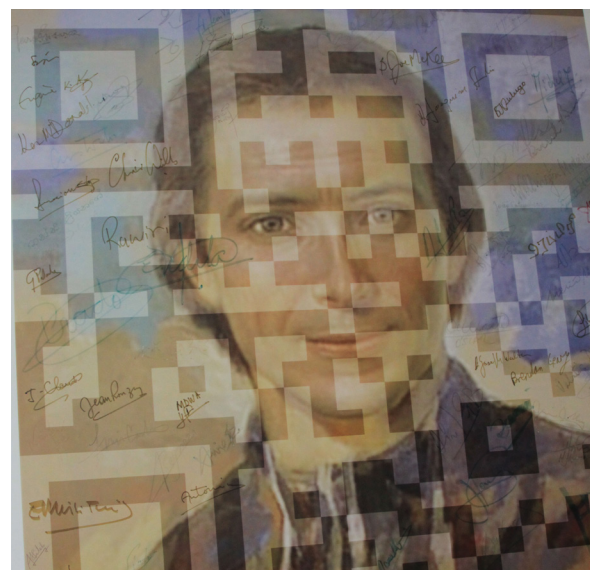
In this part, it is important that a secretary records the ideas expressed. The notes will be very useful for the final synthesis meeting.

Having listened with the heart to our personal experiences and the reflections engendered by the experience of the three other congregations, we share the responses that arise in us from the following questions:

- What new ideas or perspectives do these shared experiences bring at the level of the:
 - a) individual,
 - b) community and/or
 - c) province, district?
- If there is no lay associative structure in your province, what implications could the existence of one have for the vitality of the Marist charism in the province? ... And if one already exists, what does it mean for the vitality of the Marist charism in the province?
- What are the new challenges you see for your Province in this topic of reflection on possible legal structures for the laity?

E. We offer the Lord our shared experience

We offer the Lord Champagnat's dream, lived out by so many Marists past and present. Our desire is that the future of the Marist charism be always at the service of the most needy children and young people and their families, of the Church and of the world. Together we build a better future, trusting that the Holy Spirit guides us along this path of communion and knowing that Our Good Mother and Marcellin walk with us.





Hymn: CONSTRÚYENOS LA CASA

CONSTRÚYENOS LA CASA DANOS TU HERENCIA.
GUARDA A NUESTRO PUEBLO QUE REINE LA PAZ
(bis).

[YouTube](#)

Es tan inútil que el hombre construya.
Es tan inútil que guarde y vigile.
Si el Señor no está en todo presente,
no triunfará nuestro plan.

Es tan inútil que al sol te levantes.
Y que trasnoches hasta amanecer.
Porque el Señor alimenta tu cuerpo
mientras descansas te ofrece su pan.

Porque la herencia de Dios son los hijos,
y su salario es el fruto del vientre,
las buenas obras que hiciste de joven
son las saetas y el arco el amor.

Feliz el hombre que tiene por norma
los presupuestos que lleva el amor,
no ha de temer a ningún adversario,
su alma es fuerte y no morirá.



PSALM 127 (THE CORNER ROOM)

[YouTube](#)

UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE,
THOSE WHO BUILD IT LABOR IN VAIN.
UNLESS THE LORD WATCHES OVER THE CITY,
THE WATCHMAN STAYS AWAKE IN VAIN.

It is in vain
That you rise up early / And go
late to rest,
Eating the bread of anxious toil; /
For he gives to his beloved sleep.

Behold, children are
A heritage from the Lord,
The fruit of the womb a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
Are the children of one's youth.

Blessed is the man
Who fills his quiver with them!
He shall not be put to shame
When he speaks with his enemies in the gate.



We read together from Matthew, who reminds us that our life – as Christians and Marists – has its foundations in Jesus Christ. In that same way that Marcellin put his trust in Jesus and in Mary, so we entrust our lives to him today.

Matthew 7, 24- 25

Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

We take a few minutes to ponder the words of the gospel in our hearts ...

As a way of concluding this prayer, we gather in a circle and embrace. We look at each other and maintain a respectful silence. Each of us is sacred ground. As a community, we feel strong because we support each other and we know that our life is founded on Jesus, the rock that firmly holds us. We sense that together we can build something new that strengthens the vitality of the Marist charism both for now and the future.

We pray together to Our Good Mother that she might walk with us and encourage us. Hail Mary, full of grace...



#MaristInternationalForum



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