



COMING CLOSER TO THE NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LAITY AND THE BROTHERS

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SPIRITUALITY AS THE MOST PROFOUND FORCE OF THE NEW RELATIONSHIP

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Spirituality becomes the centre of our unity, of our new relationship between laity and brothers, in power of our mission, in the path of our response to God. Marist spirituality is the common path we share as brothers and lay people, and as such, of a lovely complementarity.

We understand it as meaning of life, as wishing to live from the roots (GAST 100). It refers to the deep and absolute dimension of existence. It moulds our form of relating to persons, the world, and God (Br Séan). The new relationship implies strengthening our Marist spiritual identity by living with passion, encountering the soul of our charism, our brotherhood, our journey towards the new land, giving depth to our existence as Marists.

Our spiritual identity reveals Mary as guide, travelling companion, sister in the faith (XXIGC). We contemplate her in **NAZARETH**. Mary of the working hands, of daily life, of the everyday, of the family, of simplicity, of work. She is the welcoming Mary of the open house, attentive to life, to the details. She is Mary of the smile, of the freshly-baked bread, of love for her spouse Joseph. She is the Mary who educates Jesus. Our spirituality has this feminine dimension from the home of Nazareth. Mary of Nazareth tells us of a spirituality without complications, with feet on the ground.

The spirituality of Nazareth redimensions the new brother–lay relationship as an invitation to discover all the richness and depth to be found in the moments and actions of daily life. Mary of Nazareth tells us that every action, however small it may be, is laden with eternity (cfr GAST 37; WfR 54). As if to say that nothing human is indifferent to faith. Work, welcome, humour, warmth



*Regional meeting of brothers
and laity of Brazil and Cono Sur*

and tenderness, solidarity, compassion, beauty, are the transparency of God.

In our spirituality appears **MARY WHO CAREFULLY TREASURES ALL THESE THINGS IN HER HEART**. It is Mary who integrates everything in her heart. The way of the contemplative, which is a matter of adjusting oneself to see every situation from God's viewpoint, just as God sees it. Mary who meditates, watches... so as to be able to be attentive to what is happening. This is the mystical dimension of our spirituality. Here Mary forms for us a spirituality of the open eyes. That of the gaze attentive to the signs of God. That which develops the capacity for discernment to discover God in all things. That which knows how to contemplate the world with the eyes and heart of God. That which looks at life with new eyes and listens attentively. It is the spirituality of discernment, of prayer, of the mystical dimension, of silence (cfr WfR 73, 74, 75).

This feature of our spiritual identity we can formulate, using an expression of our times, as "piercing through life". This means learning to scrutinize existence in an habitual manner so as to find God who is there in the ordinary. Our God makes himself present in the profane. We can discover God in life and in history. This life and this history are sacraments of God. The contemplative gaze opens us to the presence of God, from the moment in which God is the depth of the real, the life of life. This was the gaze of Champagnat, the one that sees God in everything.

In the new brothers-lay relationship, this gaze lets us recognize each other as face, sign, expression of the love of God. It helps us look at ourselves with God's eyes and know how to read and treasure in our hearts the newness that is coming to us from God through others.

On the spiritual journey we share as brothers and laity, appears **MARY OF THE VISITATION**, she of the dusty feet, the traveler, who moves, searches, transmits. Mary of the Visitation becomes the loving face of God. She who leads to Jesus. She who thinks of others.

The new relationship is anchored in this apostolic spirituality, which discovers God in the world and the world refers us to God (GAST 122). What drives us to mission. What gives meaning to our human experiences and allows us to read life with the eyes and heart of God, and understand it as a project of his love (WfR 129). That with the passion of the apostle, as Champagnat and the first brothers lived it (WfR 5).

This third feature of our spirituality results in our being brothers and sisters of all we encounter on the road of life. From the new relationship, "our desire is to be a visible and permanent memory of the loving and merciful presence of God in the midst of people, living signs of the Father's tenderness" (AdR 137).

BE SIGNS OF THE TENDERNESS OF THE FATHER

For reflection



*Gathered Around the Same Table,
General Santos City, Philippines*

Readings:

- Chap. 4 Spirituality of *Gathered around the same table*
- *Water from the Rock*: Chap. 3: As brothers and sisters.

Spirituality understood as **meaning of life**, how to wish to live it from the roots (GAST 100), as the deep and absolute dimension of existence, does this find an echo in your life?

What has to change in me?

A *new relationship* between brothers and lay persons. You see already that “new” is not an innocuous adjective, it speaks of change of mentality, attitudes, practices. And it is not necessarily a change on the part of others, without starting with myself. What has to change in me? (Br Emili).

For facing up to:

- Experience the spirituality as the most profound force of the lay-brother relationship.
- Establish that the spirituality is the soul of our charism, our fraternity, our existence.
- My spiritual identity involves Mary as travelling companion and sister in faith.
- I discover that nothing human is a matter of indifference to my faith.
- With Mary I feel myself brother and sister of all whom I meet on the road of life.
- I perceive the new relationship anchored in apostolic spirituality, which drives to mission, which discovers God in the world.