



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

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OUR MARIST FUTURE IS A FUTURE OF COMMUNION

Our future of communion impels us to seek together a greater vitality of the charism in today's world. To the extent that we walk together, there will arise new forms of relationships, ever deeper, that will demand new structures that welcome and promote vitality.

We see our Marist future as a communion of persons in the charism of Champagnat, where our specific vocations are mutually enriched (XXI GC). This experience of sharing the charism brings us to rethink the institutional model that up to now has been the face of the Marist charism in the Church. "Experience seems to indicate that we not only need to widen the tent of the Institute, but also to build together a new tent where everyone, Brothers and Lay Marists, may find our place" (Gathered Around the Same Table - GAST 145). There is no doubt that to the degree we walk together, there will arise new forms of relationship, each time more profound, that will demand new structures that welcome and promote vitality.

Our international meetings have demonstrated a clear awareness that vitality and the future of our charism pass through this new relationship between Brothers and Lay Marists. We recognise that the brothers are depositories of a rich inheritance, but together, as lay people and brothers, we can increase our forces at the moment of interweaving a new experience of the charism (Meeting at St. Paul-Trois-Châteaux on shared formation). Together with the Brothers, we are responsible for promoting and extending this gift of God into the future (GAST 29). Together, we can think of how we want the Marist future to be, a large and shining home (GAST 99).

Our future of communion impels us to "together seek a greater vitality for the charism in today's world". We relate it with the "new land", that of an authentic renewal of the Institute, that of a new way of being brother, that of a new relationship, that of new and creative styles of educating, of evangelizing and of defending the rights of poor children and young people, that of new mission fields on the edge, that of the revitalization of vocation ministry through the joint efforts of Brothers and Lay Marists (cf. XXI GC).

Together we face the future of the charism as a challenge to help bring about the dawning of new



Marist life and strengthening the one that exists, making it more creative, faithful and dynamic (GAST 169), as we look for new paths for the expression of the Marist mission (GAST 47).

Accepting this challenge (the future of the Marist charism) should change the attitude of the Brothers and of the Institute: from an attitude of reacting, of resignation, frustration or defensiveness in face of the supposed threat of seeing themselves displaced from the central position in evangelization or of seeing their identity snatched by the laity ... to a pro-active attitude, stemming from a joyful appraisal of the charism and knowing how to move forward to occupy the position and the function that corresponds to each so as to advance the communion of the whole body or charismatic family in service to the common mission.

Walking together, Brothers and Lay Marists, in the experience of the same foundational charism, brings with it attitudes of trust, not of suspicion; of joint responsibility and service, not of high-handedness; of realizing we are all apprentices in life and not proud wise people; of feeling we are family beyond the differences and failures we meet up with, wagering always on communion. Our future is a future of communion. "The congregations that do not open their charisms to lay people can compromise their own vitality and future" (Br. Benito Arbués, 1997).

This future of communion invites us to be creative. "The founders knew how to embody in their time with bravery and holiness the evangelical message. It is necessary that, faithful to the breath of the Spirit, their spiritual children continue over time that testimony, imitating their creativity with a mature fidelity to the charism of the origins, always attentive to the demands of the present time" (John Paul II). Creative fidelity, necessary in order to maintain and carry forward the Marist charism in the Church, will no longer depend solely on the Institute which until recent times represented it, but also on Lay Marists. All of us, Brothers and Lay Marists, must continue the story that had its origin in the evangelizing efforts of Champagnat, and that today continues with new chapters in the Church-Communion.

There is an institutional dimension to this path of communion. 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 (cf. GAST 134). The Brothers and Lay Marists who came together in St. Paul spoke of experimenting and creating new models of Marist life and mission that would help the Brothers and Lay Marists in their common and their specific vocations. But the future is one of communion.

**AS SEARCH NEW ROADS
EXPRESSION MARIST MISSION (EMM 47)**

For reflection



Meeting of European fraternities in Alcalá

Readings:

- Chap. 6 Courses of growth in vocation from *Gathered Around the Same Table*.
- *And Our Tents Also* (Br Michael Green).

“Reality seems to indicate not only that we need to widen the tent of the Institute, but together build a *new tent* where all of us, Lay Marists and Brothers, may find our place”. Why a new tent? What would this involve for Brothers and Lay Marists? What do you imagine this tent would look like?

What needs to change in me?

A new relationship between brothers and lay persons. You see now that the word “new” is not a harmless adjective; it speaks of a change of mentality, of attitudes, of practices, and not necessarily a change on the part of others, but beginning with myself. What needs to change in me? (Br Emili).

Confronting myself:

- I believe that the future of the Marist charism will be through the new relationship between Lay Marists and Brothers.
- It encourages me to think that together, Brothers and Lay Marists, we can promote a greater vitality of the charism.
- I am convinced that our Marist future is a future of communion.
- I am not frightened by the challenge to help bring to birth the dawn of a new Marist life.
- More than resignation or frustration dominate in me the power of the search for new paths in the expression of the charism.
- I think that perhaps we have to build a new tent where we all can find our place.