

The marist

lay vocation



Gathered around the same table

“A Brother approached me and asked me: Are you also a Marist? (I believe he was asking me if I was a Marist Brother.) And I responded: Yes, I am a Marist. This expression came from the depths of my soul, and I felt recognized on responding that way” (Testimony of a lay person from Spain).

“I am able to clearly hear this call in my life, as if that vocation had been thought of especially for me. I am talking about a call that permeates my entire life, a vocation that constantly challenges me, each time that I respond with a “Yes”, I become better at the different situations that my lay condition invites me to live” (Testimony of a lay person from Brazil).

“With much emotion I am able to say that my experience as a lay Marist is a road with no turning back” (Testimony of a lay person from Chile).

“The Marist vocation is not an experience that is lived in specific moments or in such and such a place, but it is something that one interiorizes and continually lives out, it doesn’t matter where one is; it is a true and proper style of life” (Testimony of a lay person from South Africa).

“Since I have come to know Marcellin, I have constantly grown, getting to know myself better and coming to feel myself more and more a member of the Marist community. The best thing that has happened to me, aside from knowing the Brothers, is having reached a point where I see that how God loves me is how he also loves them. He has given me a place where I feel at home” (Testimony of a lay person from Australia).

Central ideas

- The world has changed and the Church finds in these new times and a new presence of God. One of them is the rediscovery of the lay vocation in the Christian community that has been a benefit, among other experiences, the reality that laypeople feel called by God to live out charisms born in the religious life.
- Lay people who are involved with the Brothers where they are situated participate in the Marist charism as their choices and personal circumstances allow. They all help to spread the work and mission of the Brothers without the need to feel like “Lay Marists”.
- Lay Marists are those persons who feel that God is calling them to live the charism of Champagnat according to their state as laypersons. It is a “vocation”: a response of the person to the experience of God in his/her own life, where they are situated in “a place in the world”. It is the awareness that God wants them in that church community, in that way of life, and in that mission.
- Therefore, the vocation does not sprout in a moment of empathy or enthusiasm, but it is an interior process of listening, which allows one to distinguish, among many experiences and circumstances, what is fundamental, what helps one to find God’s peace. As such, the Marist lay vocation requires processing, time and contrast.
- The vocation of the Brother and the lay-Marist complement each other. They are not meant to substitute for each other but to be of mutual support. Together we discover how to live as followers of Jesus in the style of Champagnat, and together we inspire each other in our involvement in ministry in the spirit of our life in common.





Questioning ourselves and sharing

We read chapter 1 on ***“the vocation of the lay Marist”***.

“Marcellin is, for us Marists, our inspiration for following Jesus.”

- *What traits of Marcellin help you in your daily life and do they make you feel that the Marist way of life is worthwhile?*

“The religious vocation of the Brothers has inspired our own lay vocation. The examples of many laypeople that have lived and live this Marist charisma have also inspired us”.

- *What people, Brothers or lay, have been examples of Marist life for you?*
- *How have they influenced you?*
- *What have you learned from them?*

“We lay Marists are Christians who have heard in our life the call of God to live the charism of Champagnat and, in our status as laity, we have responded to it”.

“This is the definition of “lay Marist”.

- *How do you feel it? And, how do you feel about the testimonies on the first page of this guide?*

“Three testimonies of one life: mission, shared life, and spirituality”

- *Describe in two or three sentences the sentiments or ideas the three dimensions of Marist life inspire in you.*



Mary of Nazareth Life Model

Marcellin offered us Mary of Nazareth as an example and model for our lives. The last General Chapter reminded us of the gift Marcellin gave to us by proposing Mary of the Visitation as an image of our path toward the future. We are able to read, by going to the text <<The Mission of Marist Education>> in an atmosphere of prayer, which helps us to be aware of this dimension of our Marian life.

- Like **Mary at the Annunciation** (Luke 1:26-38) we are open to the action of God in our lives. In spite of our doubts and fears, we accept the invitation to take part in the work of proclaiming the Good News. In this time of self sufficiency, we put ourselves in God's hands.
- Like **Mary at the Visitation** (Luke 1: 39-45) we depart from our meeting with the Lord filled with faith and hope. We set out to meet the youth in places where they need us, offering them our friendship/love. In these days of individualism, we place ourselves at the service of others.
- Like **Mary at the Magnificat** (Luke 1:46-55) we praise the Lord for the gift of life. In this age of the defense of Human Rights, we align ourselves with youth and young children.
- Like **Mary at Bethlehem** (Luke 2:1-20) we become like Jesus, who was born amidst the poor and lowly. We are ready to work for with them in the most inhospitable places. In this time of consumerism, we learn to live with less.
- Like **Mary at Nazareth** (Luke 2: 39-52) we pay attention to, orient ourselves to, and care for young people, helping them to grow in the knowledge and love of God Who is active in their lives. We teach them to respect all He has created. Like Mary, we accept them as they are, including when we do not understand their moods or attitudes. In these days of "personal gratification", we offer them love and generosity.
- Like **Mary at Cana** (John 2: 1-11) we are sensitive to the needs of others. We invite young people to do what Jesus wants us to do. In these days when egocentrism reigns, we become more concerned about others.
- Like **Mary at Calvary** (John 19:25-27) we recognize Jesus in the faces of those who suffer, we suffer along with them with a maternal heart, and we believe in them with a mother's passion. In these times when hope battles against desperation, we remain at the side of those who are suffering, or dying.
- Like **Mary of the Cenacle** (Acts 1:12; 2:4) we form community in our environment. In these times of spiritual disorientation or indifference, we have faith in a new Church, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Together, we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us and that calls us the <<children of the same Father>>. Our Father....