

Passion and

Spirit for living

Gathered around the same table

When we speak of Christian spirituality, we refer to that unquenchable fire that burns within, filling us with passion for building the Kingdom of God. This becomes the driving force of our lives, as we allow the Spirit of Christ to guide us (*Water from the Rock, Introduction*).

“Integrating” Spirituality ***Marist Spirituality***

Often people think that you can’t have both the spiritual life and a life lived firmly planted in the world. It has to be one or the other – prayer or the world of work and family, the transcendent or life at the service of others, contemplation or political engagement.

This can leave us feeling as if we’re split in two.

There must be a movement in us from organised religion to the Kingdom of God, from the Church to the world, from the individual to humanity. This transition must be made without losing what is essential about our prayer life and our personal and Christian identity.

Christian spirituality should be characterised by unity - a love of God and of neighbour. It should also be marked by an experience of being brothers and sisters in faith to one another.

A person who prays in the name of Christ and proclaims the Kingdom of God cannot sit back and do nothing in the face of oppression. And a person who struggles against injustice cannot do it without grounding that action in prayer.

Chapter 4 of *‘Gathered Around the Same Table’* gives a good orientation for Marist spirituality. It begins by saying that spirituality is a desire to live from the depths not just on the surface, and it then affirms that the centre of our spirituality is Jesus. Mary is our model for following Jesus. Our Marist characteristics of simplicity, love of work and even sense of humour flow from her example of being in close relationship with her Son. Read the text carefully and try to visualise how the words speak to your life.



Questioning ourselves and sharing

Marist Spirituality

In Marist spirituality, Jesus is not a distant person. Marcellin invited us to encounter Jesus in three privileged places where Jesus reveals God's love and tenderness to us: the Crib of Bethlehem where we find the innocence, simplicity, gentleness and even the weakness of a God capable of touching the hardest of hearts, the Altar where we find a privileged place to enter into communion with the Body of Christ, and the foot of the Cross where the crucified Christ is the sign and deepest expression of a God who is love.

- *Have you encountered Jesus in the places mentioned or in others?*
- *What difficulties do you experience meeting Jesus in your life?*

As Marists, we always find a place in our lives for Mary, the mother of Jesus and of the Church, our 'Good Mother', our sister in the faith, first and perfect disciple and model.

- *What inspires you about Mary? What draws you to her as a model for life today?*
- *How do aspects of your life demonstrate the Marial dimension of our spirituality?*

Because our lives find their source in Jesus, we Marists have a way of being Christian that comes to us from the lived experience of Marcellin and his first community – simplicity, love of work, exercise of the presence of God, family prayer....

- *What aspects of your life resonate with this particular Marist style?*
- *How is the way you live your daily life an expression of the particular Marist style of spirituality? (your life at work, in the family, in your free time)*





Here we are, Lord, searching for you

We share in the rich spiritual traditions of the whole Church, but we are the 'guardians' of two sacred places: the lives of children and the spaces of unity with each other where we relate as brothers and sisters in a community of faith.

We are encouraged to grow three attitudes in our hearts because they sum up Marcellin's spiritual experience: trust in the presence of God (Incarnation), simplicity (openness and honesty) and a childlike confidence in placing our trust in Mary's tenderness.

Each time that we open ourselves to God with our whole being in union with our families, our communities of Brothers and Lay Marists, with children and young people, and with Mary, we celebrate a communion which expresses and nourishes our way of being believers in our time. It is where the wind of the Spirit is driving me. (Testimony from Uruguay)

Believers and non-believers alike, searching constantly with all their hearts, struggle against the distractions and demands of our secular world.

As Marists, we have confidence in the gift of the Spirit and, with Mary at our side, with an attitude of simplicity, we approach Jesus at the Crib of Bethlehem, at the Eucharistic Table and at the foot of the Cross.

Today we spend time in prayer in these three places.

- *At the Crib, we contemplate our humanity and its history in the light of a God who has pitched his tent in our midst, and whom we call 'brother'.*
- *At the Table of the Eucharist, we stand as one with all, we deepen our relationship with the living presence of Jesus and we find the power to share this Good News.*
- *At the foot of the Cross, we are filled with hope because life is always being reborn where there is love.*

We can share these experiences, discover our needs, and those of our brothers and sisters in faith, and present them to the Lord through the intercession of Mary.

Lord Jesus, we ask you to guide our world towards life and hope, for we see that there are many faces of darkness drawing us away from you. We ask you to enable us to be your messengers of peace and joy since the One who lives close to you is always full of courage and enthusiasm.