

We are Good News

Gathered around the same table

The document « *Around the same table* » is born from life. The spirit which animates it and the initiative from which it proceeds is the experience of many lay persons, men and women, throughout the world, who perceive that God is calling them to a vocation: to be lay Marists.

« *The first thing that captivated me about the charism was its educational purpose, sensing that « being Marist » is a form of being Christian in the world; an uncommon situation in religious movements. But what made me choose to be Marist, was seeing myself confirmed in my womanhood, in my being as an educator, in my being a member of the Church, in a community in which one breathes an atmosphere of family. This is seen in the depth and simplicity of the links, in accompaniment, in constant and liberating presence, in difficulties and disagreements, just as in any family.* » (Testimony from Uruguay)

« *I will retire from teaching service next year. I hope to go into active evangelization with the help of God. There is no retirement for a committed lay Marist.* » (Testimony from Nigeria)

« *In the simplicity of life of so many brothers and lay people I have come to realize that the Marist life is not only for educators; that each one of us from our profession, from our occupation, whatever it is, are capable of giving love to the many people who need it, especially the children, and in this way to educate them as good Christians and good citizens.* » (Testimony from Colombia)

« *In the months of suffering and uncertainty, with our small son in hospital, accompanied in his bed by his doll «Champagnat», I have felt our Marist family suffering with us, praying for us and being happy with us. We have known the authentic meaning of communion. If this is not sharing life, what is it?* » (Testimony from Spain)

Content for study

- Reading of the “Open letter” of the document « Gathered around the same table ».
- Reflection on the content shared or on what we reached agreement on in the course of the journey of reflection the group has made in previous sessions.
- If it seems opportune, there can be dialogue about the fraternities of the CMMF: one possible way of being in link with the Marist charism.

Identity of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (CMMF)

Its origin and inspiration:

- The Holy Spirit makes himself present in the Church today in a special way, by urging lay people to commit themselves more seriously to their vocation as disciples of Jesus and co-participants in his mission.
- One example of this action is the fact that, in many countries of the world, numerous persons connected with the brothers have asked for help in deepening their Christian commitment and making it more concrete.
- They desire to share in more depth the spirituality and the mission which the brothers have received as an inheritance from their founder, Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

In Fraternities:

- The members of the Movement meet in Fraternities where they share and nourish their ideals. Each member is responsible for the life of his/her Fraternity. The ultimate responsibility of assuring that the Movement stays faithful to the spirit and tradition of Fr Champagnat falls on the Superior General of the Marist Institute.

Members:

- The Movement is open to any Christian who feels called to follow Jesus more closely, according to the spirituality of Marcellin Champagnat.
- To become part of the Movement, the person interested requests admission to a fraternity. After a time of preparation, he/she is accepted as an active member.

(From the Life Project of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family)





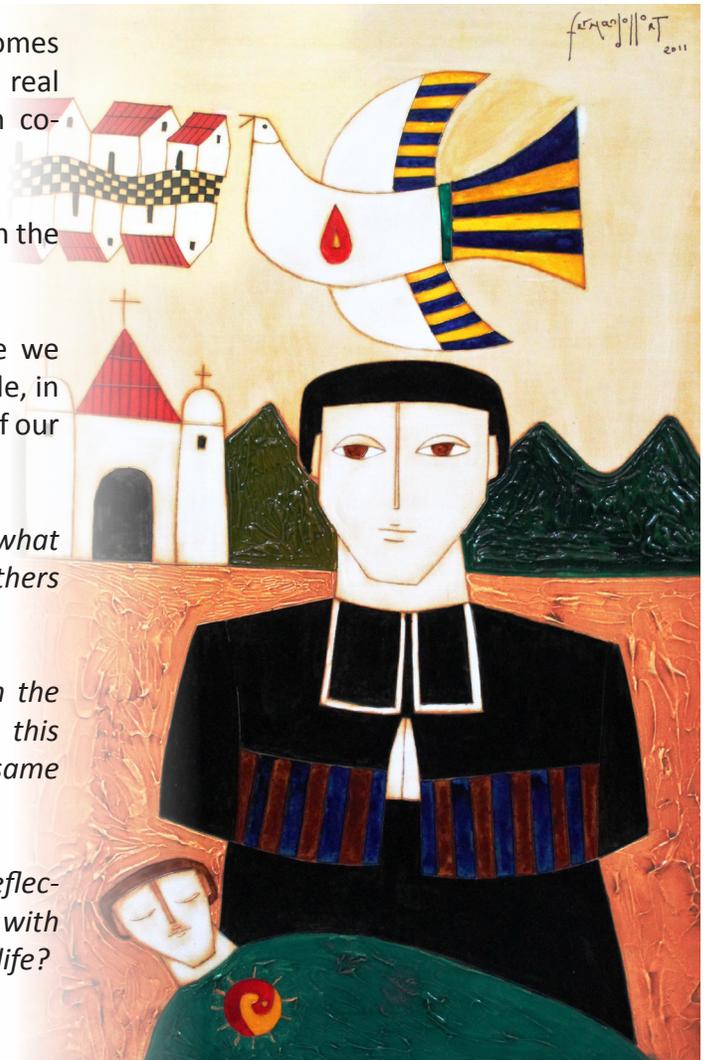
Questioning ourselves and sharing

« I dream about Marist works where the person always comes before everything else. Where the shared mission is so real that it is planned, fashioned and decided together, in co-responsibility.

I dream that we can be more valiant every day and bold in the option for the most disadvantaged.

I dream of a family of Brothers and lay people where we support each other and we take responsibility side by side, in mutual service, a family where Jesus is, truly, the centre of our life. » (Testimony from Spain).

- *After the journey travelled with the group, set down what are your dreams about the Marist life between brothers and laity called to live the charism of Champagnat.*
- *Or write a letter to Father Champagnat, telling him the sentiments and challenges you have felt following this process of reflection on the document « Around the same table ».*
- *Evaluate the group's journey during this itinerary of reflection and communion. Would it be possible to continue with the group to study other topics and share our Marist life?*





Champagnat

You will be Champagnat, today

- Listen in a prayerful attitude to some extracts from letters or the dreams members of the group have set down.
- Final prayer of the group.

*Thank you, Jesus, for calling me to follow you.
Thank you, Mary, for your tender, close presence.
Thank you, Marcellin, for your contagious passion
and for allowing me to become
immersed in your project.*

*Thank you, Brothers, for sharing your treasure,
for inviting us to dream together in brotherhood;
living the same mission, with a single heart.*

*Thanks to everyone, Brothers and Lay Marists,
for showing me that one can be happier
knowing how to work and to love:
to work for what we love
and to love what we do.*

Amen.