

A Champagnat Marist Prayer Resource for Advent

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What is in the resource?

The resource comprises:

* A theme developed from the Gospel of the day
* The readings and psalm of the day
* An opening and concluding prayer
* A reading from a Champagnat Marist document related to a theme of the Gospel for the day
* Three intercessions
* The Sunday resource has a religious poem.

How to this resource could be used:

The Advent prayer resource is designed to assist in focusing our community prayer on the Gospel reading of the day as we journey through Advent. The resource is flexible and could be used on its own or as part of another form of community prayer.

The Solidarity resource *Daily Reflections for Advent 2014: Children’s Right to Participation* is also available for your reflection.

A suggested process:

As part of the community prayer:

* Read the Gospel of the day.
* Then allow several minutes of silent reflection.
* Then invite the participants to share any reflection they may have on the Gospel and/or the Champagnat Marist reading.

Preparation for Community Prayer:

As part of the preparation for community prayer:

* Read the Gospel for the day,
* Read a Scripture commentary. An online commentary from the Society of Jesus in Ireland is available at <http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie>
* Make a short note of what emerged for you from the reading.

Why was the resource developed?

The recent General Chapters have all urged us, as part of the ongoing process of centering our lives on Jesus Christ, to deepen our personal and community prayer. One way to assist this is to develop a style of community prayer based on the Gospel.

Brothers Today has developed this resource based on the theme, prayers and intercessions which were developed by the participants in the annual retreat.

Sunday Advent I – 30 November | Stay Awake

**Prayer**

Gracious God,   
in this Advent of expectation

you call us to be awake and ready  
to recognise the signs of your  
kingdom in our midst

A kingdom of justice and mercy,

of joy and of peace.

May we be aware of your presence in our lives.

Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:1, 3-8 | That you would tear the heavens apart and come down**
* **Psalm 80**
* **1 Corinthians 1:3-9 | The revelation we looked for, Christ Jesus, our Lord**
* **Mark 13:33-37 | Stay awake! You never know when the Lord will come**

**Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, par. 73**

As mystics we perceive “the footprints of God” in all the events of life. Through a reading of our reality in faith, we are taken beyond appearances and surface meanings, and brought into the depths of each situation. Our prayer becomes, *Oh Lord, how great is your love!* And with a deep trust that comes from knowing we are profoundly loved, we confidently open our hearts to God’s will.

**Intercessions**

We pray that we may use this time of Advent to examine all of our relationships with others, material possessions and God. Lord hear us.

We pray for those trapped in the darkness of addiction, that they may be freed. Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to recognise you and respond to you in love through every person and every experience of this day. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Loving God,

You loved the world so much  
that You gave us Your only Son  
to be our Saviour.

When Jesus humbled himself  
to be born among us   
and take on our humanity,  
he fulfilled the plan You formed long ago.

Jesus opened for us the way of salvation.

In this Advent season,  
we watch in expectation for the day,  
hoping that the salvation promised us will come,  
when Christ our Lord  
will come again in his glory. Come Lord Jesus!

Advent 1 – Monday 1 December | Faith

**Prayer**

Gracious God,

we pray that we may have the same faith   
as Jesus speaks about in the gospel.

May the faith that can move mountains

also move our hearts   
as we prepare for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We make this prayer through  
Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 2:1-5 | The Lord will gather many nations in peace in the kingdom of heaven**
* **Psalm 121**
* **Matthew 8:5-11 | Many will come and take their place in the kingdom of heaven**

**Marist Reading – A Revolution of the Heart, p. 9**

Many of us realize that the worlds in which we live can no longer be expected to carry the faith for us. The time is long past when we could count on living in a Christian culture, or even on being surrounded by believers. Even in some of our Marist communities, those among us who wish to have a vibrant life of faith cannot count on some in the group for support.

So, here at the dawn of a new millennium, more than a few of us long for a God who will dwell at the centre of our lives. One to whom we can relate easily, and who will provide depth of meaning and an answer to our ultimate concerns. This is the God around whom we long to renew our spirituality and build a life of personal and communal prayer.

**Intercessions**

We pray for all those who show genuine concern for their neighbours and bring peace of mind and heart to those who suffer from our inhumanity to others. Lord hear us.

We ask your blessing, Lord, on those who show real concern for the spiritual and material good of their neighbours. Lord hear us.

Lord, increase our faith as we wait in hope for the coming of the Saviour. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| God of hope, be with us as we begin this Advent journey.  Increase our faith,  Show us your ways,  Teach us your paths, | That we might walk with you more closely,  Our hand in your hand,  Our feet in your footsteps,  That we like Mary and Marcellin  May be your willing servants.  Amen. |

Advent 1 – Tuesday 2 December | Openness to Revelation

**Prayer**

Loving God,   
you reveal great things to your followers,  
especially those with a humble and open disposition.

Help us to set aside our fears and hesitations,  
and to embrace you more wholeheartedly   
in this season of active preparation for your coming among us.

We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 11:1-10 | The Spirit of the Lord rests upon him**
* **Psalm 72**
* **Luke 10:21-24 | Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit**

**Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, pars. 19-20 | Love of Jesus and His Gospel**

Marcellin taught the first Brothers: To make Jesus known and loved is the aim of our vocation and the whole purpose of the Institute. If we were to fail in this purpose, our congregation would be useless. In saying this, Marcellin clearly expressed his conviction, and a growing conviction for Marists today – the centrality of Jesus in our life and mission.

For us Jesus is the human face of God. In a privileged way we encounter him in the three special Marist places, where Jesus reveals God to us.

**Intercessions**

Lord, open our eyes, ears and minds to the mystery of your revelation in our daily lives. Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to welcome the Word of God into our hearts, as a beautiful gift and a privileged encounter with you. Lord hear us.

Lord, may all Champagnat Marists encourage one another and the young people confided to our care. May our relationships with others be marked by joyful simplicity and wholehearted generosity. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

God, loving Father of us all,  
we are encouraged to confidently welcome   
and share your message   
despite our limitations.

May your kingdom be proclaimed.

May your gifts be received.

May we live in charity and authenticity  
and thus reveal you in today’s world.

Amen.

Advent I – Wednesday 3 December | Healing

St Francis Xavier

**Prayer**

Loving God,   
you challenge us this Advent,  
this time of preparation,  
to put aside our pride  
And to understand our need for  
repentance and forgiveness.

Purify our hearts and sanctify our lives.

We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 25:6-10 | The Lord God will wipe away tears from every face**
* **Psalm 23**
* **Matthew 15:29-37 | Jesus healed many and multiplied the bread**

**Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, par. 124**

Marist spirituality, being apostolic, is lived out on mission. The mission of Marist apostles is born of the experience of being loved by God and of our desire to actively participate in the mission of Jesus. God is passionate about the world and its people, and Jesus expresses this love by a ministry of teaching and healing. *I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly*. Like Jesus we recognise the urgings of the Spirit within, calling us to witness to this Good News. Out of these inner promptings, the mission of the Church is born: to proclaim the Kingdom of God as a new way of living for humanity, a new way to relate with God. We join in this mission of the Church as we look upon the world with compassion.

**Intercessions**

We pray that we may be open to hear, to see and to understand the message of Jesus. Lord hear us.

We pray that we may be open to the healing presence of Jesus Christ. Lord hear us.

We pray that we may follow faithfully the way of Jesus Christ, to tell courageously the truth of Jesus Christ, and to live joyfully the life of Jesus Christ. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Gracious Father,  
you call us to the fullness of life.

In this Advent season, may the Baptist’s call  
resound in our hearts and minds,  
drawing us to the living water  
where we find healing and forgiveness.

Amen.

Advent 1 – Thursday 4 December | Discipleship

St John Damascene

**Prayer**

God who dwells with us,

we pray for one gift this Advent;

we pray for a change of heart.

For any relationship with you

is more an affair of the heart than of the head.

We pray for hearts open enough so that we can,

like Mary, take you at your word

and not demand that all of our questions

be answered at that outset.

We pray too that our hearts be as fruitful as Mary’s

and eventually as passionate, on fire,

full of love for Jesus and His Good News. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 26:1-6 | Let the upright nations, the custodians of truth, come in**
* **Psalm 118**
* **Matthew 7:21, 24-27 | Whoever does the will of my Father will enter the kingdom of heaven**

**Marist Reading – Marvellous Companions, pp. 9-10**

But God has also entrusted himself and his work to our care, and in so doing has invited us to make Jesus Christ the centre and passion of our lives. In accepting this invitation you and I become his disciples. That fact alone renders unnecessary any imagined wall standing between our mission and community.

The members of our 20th General Chapter said much the same in their *Message*. “Like Mary,” they challenged us, “let Christ be the centre and passion of your life and the life of your community.” Our identity as disciples of Christ lies at the heart of our mission *and* of our life together as brothers in community.

**Intercessions**

We pray for a disciple’s heart that is open to the action of the Holy Spirit. Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray that we may be like the sensible person who listens to your word and acts on it. Lord hear us.

Lord, as we prepare for Christmas, help us to find the right balance between action and prayer in our lives. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lord, what you will, let it be so,  Where you will, there we will go, What is your will, help us to know. | Because you will it, it is best,  Because you will it, we are blest,  Until in your hands our hearts find their rest.  Amen. |

Advent I – Friday 5 December | Spreading the Good News

**Prayer**

God of life,  
as we begin this period of Advent,  
may we see Your unconditional love for us  
in the birth of Jesus.

As we rejoice in the birth of our Saviour  
renew our faith in the   
healing presence of Jesus in our lives. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 29:17-24 | In that day the eyes of the blind will see**
* **Psalm 27**
* **Matthew 9:27-31 | Their belief in Jesus brought the cure of the two blind men**

**Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 88-90**

We pray in all situations, with creativity and generosity. No matter the difficulties and struggles of daily life, no matter the limitations and injustices we live with, we continue to see the blessings of God upon us and those we love. Like Mary in her Magnificat prayer, we are grateful to God who has blessed us.

In our times of solitude, we cultivate an interior life that strengthens our love of, and communion with, the world. In this way we become more sensitive to life. Though we experience the poverty of our limitations and failures, we also recognize the beauty and wonder of humanity and of all creation.

Day after day, we feel called to commit ourselves to the world; to contemplate the world with the eyes and the heart of God. Our spirituality draws us to deepen our relationship with Christ and in trust to give ourselves in service in community living and mission.

**Intercessions**

Lord, heal our blindness when we cannot see your will for us. Lord hear us.

Lord, as you came to us a s a child; give us the insight to see your redeeming love for us.   
Lord hear us.

Lord, give us the courage to spread your Good News among all those we encounter. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

God of love,   
in the birth of Jesus you show us  
your personal love for each one of us.

Give us a stronger belief in, and love for  
Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

Amen.

Advent 1 – Saturday 6 December | A call to be Harvesters

St Nicholas

**Prayer**

In your time, Saving God  
You walked upon this earth  
And in your time  
Became one of us  
To show what we could become  
Remind us always  
As we look at our lives  
In comparison with yours  
That at the centre of all things  
Is the saving Grace of God. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26 | If you have mercy the Lord God will be gracious when you cry**
* **Psalm 146**
* **Matthew 9:35, 10:1,6-8 | When Jesus saw the crowd he felt sorry for them**

**Marist Reading – Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved, p. 39**

I believe Marcellin might also raise some troubling questions. Honest questions, but disturbing, nonetheless. Questions such as: Does sufficient evidence exist to prove that you and I are bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to poor children and young people here at the outset of the third millennium? When the Christian young people entrusted to our care move on from our programs and institutions, have they come to know and love Jesus Christ? Are the teachings and values of his *Good News* evident in their day-to-day lives?

**Intercessions**

May we be carriers of the Good News by becoming shepherds leading the sheep to where they belong. Lord hear us.

May we have the courage to accept the call from the Good Shepherd to liberate people from all binds them. Lord hear us.

Lord, we ask your blessing on those who labour in the fields among the needy to bring hope into their lives. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| In your time, Mighty God You will come in glory And in your time Gather the harvest  From one end of this earth to the other | Remind us always In times of plenty And in times of famine That at the centre of all things  Is the love and mercy of God.  Amen. |

Sunday Advent 2 – 6 December | Prepare a way for the Lord

**Prayer**

Lord of heaven and earth,   
you govern all things according to your love.

May the light of the Gospel  
scatter the darkness of the world,  
And may you open the hearts of all   
who remain blind to the Truth.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 | Make straight in the desert the way of the Lord**
* **Psalm 85**
* **2 Peter 3:8-14 | We wait for a new heaven and a new earth**
* **Mark 1:1-8 | Prepare a way for the Lord**

**Marist Reading – Evangelisers in the Midst of Youth, par. 69**

We are invited to be prophets in our time, to listen to the calls that God is sending us through the lives and suffering of so many brothers and sisters who find themselves at the margin of society. In these specific conditions, feeling a responsibility to proclaim the Gospel and denounce the profaning of God’s face present in each person, our mission takes shape and becomes set, enriched by the particular goings-on in the world us. In this process we approach young people and open our eyes to their dreams and plans and their genuine challenges. This offers us the wherewithal to truly become builders of justice and peace in the world. Ours is a prophetic Church in tune with the prophetic vocation of youth.

**Intercessions**

We pray that our faith may make a difference in the world. Lord hear us.

We pray that all nations may know true and lasting peace. Lord hear us.

We pray that we may be attentive to the prophets in our time. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Almighty God,

You sent John the Baptist into the world  
to prepare the way for Your Son.  
May we also prepare a place for  
Your Son in our hearts.

Give us the conviction to actively work  
for a more just world  
on which all of creation  
reflects Your goodness and grace.

Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

Advent 2 - Monday 8 December

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Prayer**

Gracious God,  
may the life of Mary, preserved from sin,  
help us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Open our hearts to your Word,  
and help us to respond generously, as Mary did.

May we become beacons of light  
where there is darkness,  
transforming our world, day by day.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **Genesis 3: 9-15, 20 | I will place enmity between your seed and the seed of the woman**
* **Psalm 98**
* **Ephesians 1: 3-6, 11-12 | God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world**
* **Luke 1: 26-38 | Rejoice, favoured one, the Lord is with you**

**Marist Reading**

Mary is, for each one of us, the sign and reality of the Kingdom already here and still to come. During the time of Advent Mary is, more than ever, the way which leads to Jesus. Without waiting for the morrow she is already living, in every detail of her daily life, the values of the kingdom which her Son is coming to establish.

**Dialogue Prayer** (from the Constitutions)

* Mary lived out her whole life in the spirit of her “Fiat”.

*She is blessed because she listened to the word of God and carried it out. (C. 38)*

* As Champagnat Marists, Lay and Brothers, we come to Mary, the Handmaid of the Lord, to be schooled by her, and we respond to her call:

*“Do whatever he tells you”. (C. 38)*

* Faithful handmaid, she lives out her YES even to the Cross.

*Mother, she ponders in her heart what Jesus does, and relates his actions to the words of Scripture. (C. 67)*

* We contemplate her, hidden and unknown in the world, faithful in her mission of bringing God to us.

*Patiently she awaits God’s hour. (C. 84)*

**Intercessions**

Let us praise God who has given us Mary as a model of holiness. We pray:

*Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.*

Be praised in Mary, comforter of the afflicted; teach us to be a healing presence in the lives of others.

*Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.*

Be praised in Mary, help of Christians; help us to proclaim the Gospel with our lives.

*Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.*

Be praised in Mary, Queen of Peace; give us forgiving hearts and bless our world with the peace that only you can give.

*Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.*

**Prayer**

Loving God,   
you have given us Mary, the mother of Jesus  
to encourage and guide us on the way to union with you.

Let her life of loving obedience and prayer  
be a beacon of light for us  
as we seek to follow your Christ.

We ask this in the name of that same Jesus Christ,   
the Eternal Word,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

Advent 2 – Tuesday 9 December| Welcoming the Lost Sheep

St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatizin

**Greeting to Mary**

O with what joy we sing of Mary, a woman of great love,  
whose openness and loving kindness,  
gave birth to God’s own Son.

Mary, O so gentle and discrete, be with us as we pray,  
to know the whisper of His presence,

The wonder of His love.

**Prayer**

Father, we praise you with Mary, for the wonders of your love.

We thank you for renewing us this morning with the gift of life in your presence.

We thank you for sending Jesus, your Son, to reveal to us your wonderful love.

We thank you for searching for us and calling us to follow Jesus.

We open our hearts, hands and minds to the people and the events of this day. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 40: 1-11 | God consoles his people**
* **Psalm 96**
* **Matthew 18: 12-14 | God does not will the little ones be lost**

**Marist Reading – In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat, pars. 204-205**

Along with other persons and institutions, we accept an advocacy role on behalf of young people who are victims, or where their rights and well-being are concerned in any way, and on behalf of greater social justice generally. We communicate with our Province community regarding our experiences and the concerns that arise, seeking collective support where this is appropriate.

Before engaging in such ministry with children and young people “at risk” or on the fringe of society, we prepare ourselves personally, professionally, and pastorally. Likewise, we resource ourselves in these domains at regular intervals, linking with and contributing to suitable programmes of ongoing formation open to youth workers.

**Intercessions**

Father, send your Spirit of welcome into our hearts. Enable us to accept and welcome those in our society who have lost their way. We pray to the Lord…

Father, have mercy on those young people lead astray. Touch their hearts, open their minds to your love. We pray to the Lord…

Father, give us the courage to speak on behalf of the needy youth on the margins of our society.

We pray to the Lord…

**Prayer**

Father, as we prepare for the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ,  
help us to follow Mary in her searching for her lost son.

Give us the courage to work for a more just world,

particularly for those young people on the margins of our society.

Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Advent 2 – Wednesday 10 December| Come to me…

**Prayer**

God of life,  
help us to look forward   
to the coming of your Son  
who shoulders our yoke and lifts our burdens  
that we may be enabled to proclaim  
the coming of your Kingdom.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 40: 25-31 | The Lord God gives strength to the weary**
* **Psalm 103**
* **Matthew 11: 28-30 | Come to me, all who are overburdened**

**Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 109**

With God’s grace we engage in the challenging journey of growing into that inner harmony that attracted people to Jesus - humble and gentle of heart. We cannot grow towards our potential as human beings without being involved with others, and responding to the support and challenges posed by those who share our journey most intimately.

**Intercessions**

Lord, we thank you for your Word which lightens our way and lifts our burdens. Lord hear us.

Lord, lighten our burdens, grant us we ask your forgiveness and healing. Lord hear us.

Lord, bless those who are overburdened and give them your peace. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

God of compassion and love,   
we thank you for your Word today  
as we prepare for the birth of Jesus,  
our way, our truth and our life.

Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Amen.

Advent 2 – Thursday 11 December| Take up your cross

St Damasus I

**Prayer**

Father, as we prepare for the birth of your Son, Jesus,  
who walked the path of obedience,  
even to the Cross.

Help us to discern your holy will in our lives  
and make our hearts obedient to the prompting  
of your Holy Spirit.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 41: 13-20 | I am your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel**
* **Psalm 145**
* **Matthew 11: 11-15 | No greater than John the Baptist has been born**

**Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 22 & 24**

At the foot of the Cross, we are in awe of a God who loves us without reserve. We find a God who shares the physical and psychological suffering, betrayal, abandonment and violence experienced by

humanity, and transforms these experiences. There we enter the mystery of redemptive suffering and learn humble fidelity in love. The crucified Christ is the sign and deepest expression of a God who is love.

At the Cross, we associate ourselves with people affected by failure and suffering, and with those who

struggle for bread, justice and peace.

**Intercessions**

We pray that we may remain faithful to proclaiming the Kingdom of God through our words and actions. Lord hear us.

We pray for those who courageously witness to the Gospel in areas where the Church is persecuted. Lord hear us.

We pray for all those who have committed their lives to building relationships of peace and justice. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

God our Father,   
we remember the violent deaths of John the Baptist and of Jesus,  
who were obedient to your will.

Look with pity on those who are suffering  
persecution because of their faith.

Grant this through  
Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Amen.

Advent 2 – Friday 12 December| Our Lady of Guadalupe

Being true to the Word of God

**Prayer**

O Lord,

Open our eyes to your presence,

Open our lips to your praise

Open our lives to your healing

Open our minds to your grace

Open our hearts to your love

And be found among us. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 48: 17-19 | If only you had listened to my commandments**
* **Psalm 1**
* **Matthew 11: 16-19 | They listened to neither John nor the Son of Man**

**Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 74**

To welcome God in this way, we need to develop an attitude of openness. With God’s help we grow into being an attentive listener to life, reflective and perceptive when reviewing the events of our life, and generous in responding to the invitations of the Spirit contained within the substance of our days.

**Intercessions**

Let us pray for one another that the Lord will open our minds and hearts to be true to the message He gives us through His word today. Lord hear us.

On this feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we pray that like Mary, we may hear the Word of God and respond generously to His call. Lord hear us.

We pray that like John the Baptist, we may be heralds of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Loving God,   
you sent your Son among us,  
born of a woman, to be our Messiah.

Open our hears to hear your Word,  
and our hearts to recognise you  
present in the daily events of our lives.

Help us, like Mary, to say “yes” to all that you ask of us.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Advent 2 – Saturday 13 December| Conversion

St Lucy

**Prayer**

God of hope, who brought love into our world,   
be the love that dwells among us.

God of love, who brought peace into our world,   
be the peace that dwells among us.

God of peace, who brought joy into our world,   
be the joy that dwells among us.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **Ecclesiasticus 48: 1-4, 9-11 | Elijah came to them**
* **Psalm 80**
* **Matthew 17: 10-13 | Elijah has already come and they did not know him**

**Marist Reading – Revolution of the Heart, p. 34**

The members of our 20th General Chapter challenged us “to centre our lives and communities in Jesus Christ, like Mary, with passion and enthusiasm, and to implement processes of human growth and conversion which promote this.”

Their Message is a challenging one, but not without its own measure of joy. Certainly, today joy must be very evident in our life and mission as Marcellin’s brothers. As one of our brothers said to me recently: “Wouldn’t it be wonderful for you and for me to come to the end of our Marist life and wonder if there was any merit in it at all, because we had enjoyed it so much?”

So, my Brothers, let us be up and doing. The challenge we face is clear, and we have the resources to contend with it. But hasn’t the challenge ever been the same, beginning with our foundation on 2nd January 1817? Marcellin put it very simply: “To love God,” he said, “to love God and to labour to make God known and loved – this is what a brother’s life should be.” In giving us this description of our vocation, he was reminding us that at the heart of our identity as Little Brothers of Mary, now as then, must be found, first and foremost, Jesus Christ and his Good News.

**Intercessions**

Let us pray for our own handicaps; Lord, in this time of Advent, help us to overcome …

The inertia and passivity which prevents us from fully embracing the Gospel. Lord hear us.

The blindness that blocks our perception of other persons as our sisters and brothers. Lord hear us.

The dyslexia which hinders our reading of the signs of our times and your plan of salvation.

Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Most gracious Father,  
remove from our hearts those forces that prevent us   
from believing in your unconditional love and mercy.

Grant us your grace, so that during this time of Advent,  
we may choose to “make straight the ways” which lead to you.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Sunday Advent 3 – 14 December | Rejoice in the Lord

**Prayer**

At this Advent-time we remember Mary and Joseph,

giving thanks for their faithfulness,

courage and obedience,

stepping out into the unknown,

in the strength of your Spirit,

playing their part

in the fulfilment of your plan

to bring your prodigal people home again.

We pray that their example

might be the pattern of our lives.

That when your gentle whisper

breaks through the clamour of this world

and into our small corner,

we might be ready to listen,

and having listened, to act. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11 | I exult for joy in the Lord**
* **Psalm LK 1:46-48**
* **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 | May you be kept blameless for the coming of the Lord**
* **John 1:6-8, 19-28 | Standing among you, unknown to you, is the one who is coming after me**

**Marist Reading - Water from the rock, par. 66-67**

In this relationship with God, we experience ourselves as unconditionally loved. A love that draws us ever more deeply into this relationship and, at the same time, more deeply into relationship with all of life. With Mary we experience life as a wonderful gift from God: *Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me*.

We find ourselves yet again hungry, not this time for meaning and purpose, but rather to know this God more and more and to become God’s loving presence in the encounters of our day.

**Intercessions**

We pray that we may recognise Christ in the presence of our brothers and sisters. Lord hear us.

We pray that all new born infants may be welcomed into homes of love. Lord hear us.

We pray in this Advent season that Jesus Christ may increasingly become the centre of our lives. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Rejoice in the Lord always

Shout out his name

For God is with us

Our God is with us

The God of our salvation

In whom alone we trust.

Rejoice in the Lord always

Shout out his name

For God is our Father

He draws us home

By streams of living water

Where we shall thirst no more.

Rejoice in the Lord always

Shout out his name

He knows our thoughts

Understands our hearts

And enables us to become

The people we were meant to be.

Amen.

Advent 3 – Monday 15 December| Belief in God

**Prayer**

God of life,  
you revealed your Son through the message of an angel.

Give us the grace to discern where you are breaking into our lives,  
And the courage to respond to your call.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **Numbers 24: 2-7, 15-17 | A star from Jacob will arise**
* **Psalm 25**
* **Matthew 21: 23-27 | John’s baptism; where did it come from?**

**Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 18 & 50**

18. We endeavour to develop our relationship with God so that, just as for Marcellin, it is our daily source of renewed spiritual and apostolic dynamism. This vitality makes us daring, despite our short-comings and limited resources. Drawing from Marcellin’s experience we embrace the mysteries of our life with confidence, openness and self-giving.

50. In such human situations we discover God as the one for whom our hearts really yearn. We realise that this longing is not of our making but primarily the work of God’s Spirit within the depths of our being. With trust, we can open ourselves and come to an experience of God.

**Intercessions**

Lord God, we pray that we may find you in the love we have for one another. Lord hear us.

Lord God, may we like John the Baptist be heralds of your presence in the world. Lord hear us.

Lord, that we may be open to the movement of your Holy Spirit in our lives. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

God, source of all gifts,   
may the joy you promise be with all Champagnat Marists.

May this blessing take us in haste  
to those on the margins of life,  
the ‘cribs’ and ‘stables’ of our world.

Amen.

Advent 3 – Tuesday 16 December| True Response to God’s Word

**Prayer**

O God,  
Enlarge our hearts that they may be big enough to receive your Word.

Stretch our hearts that they may be a shelter for those in need of healing.

Stretch our hearts that they may be a place of nourishment for those who hunger for justice.

Enlarge our hearts until they become your kingdom here on earth.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **Zephaniah 3: 1-2, 9-13 | Messianic salvation is promised to all of the poor**
* **Psalm 34**
* **Matthew 21: 28-32 | John came and sinners believed in him**

**Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 80**

Daily contact with the Word of God allows us to connect with our personal journey from the perspective of the History of Salvation. It takes us beyond our personal window on life to the larger window of the journey of the People of God.

**Intercessions**

Lord, we pray that we may see the world through the eyes of poor children and respond with compassion to their needs. Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray for those who doubt your existence. May our lives witness your love. Lord hear us.

Lord, we ask the grace for every child to discover their infinite dignity as your son or daughter.

Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Jesus, once again this Advent,  
we rejoice in your accepting us,   
ceaselessly seeking us,  
freely treasuring us  
with love older than the earth itself,  
or the distant stars,  
yet ever new each day.

Amen.

Advent 3 – Wednesday 17 December| The Whakapapa of Jesus Christ

**O Sapientia**

O Come, O wisdom of our God most high,  
guiding creation with power and love,  
come to teach us the path of knowledge. (Is. 11: 2-3)

**Prayer**

Wisdom of God most high,  
you guide creation with power and love.

Teach us this Advent  
the path of knowledge.  
We make this prayer through Jesus,  
who lives with you and the Father.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **Genesis 49: 2, 8-03 | The sceptre shall not pass from Judah**
* **Psalm 72**
* **Matthew 1: 1-17 | A genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David**

**Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 124**

Marist spirituality, being apostolic, is lived out on mission. The mission of Marist apostles is born of the experience of being loved by God and of our desire to actively participate in the mission of Jesus.

God is passionate about the world and its people, and Jesus expresses this love by a ministry of teaching and healing. I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly. Like Jesus we recognise the urgings of the Spirit within, calling us to witness to this Good News. Out of these inner promptings,

the mission of the Church is born: to proclaim the Kingdom of God as a new way of living for humanity, a new way to relate with God. We join in this mission of the Church as we look upon the world with compassion.

**Intercessions**

O Lord, come to all who wait in darkness and fill them with your light. Lord hear us.

O Lord, come to your Church and renew it through the power of your Spirit. Lord hear us.

O Lord, come into our broken world and give us your peace. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

God of love,   
in the birth of Jesus you show us  
your personal love for each one of us.

Give us a stronger belief in, and love for  
Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

Amen.

Advent 3 – Thursday 18 December| Growth from Doubt to Faith and Trust

**O Adonai**

Come O Leader of ancient Israel,  
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai,  
come to rescue us with your mighty power. (Isaiah 11: 4-5)

**Prayer**

O God of might,  
you revealed yourself to Moses in the burning bush.

You continue to reveal yourself  
through your Son, Jesus.

Come to us and set us free from all that  
blocks our complete acceptance of your unconditional love.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **Jeremiah 23: 5-8 | I will raise a virtuous branch for David**
* **Psalm 72**
* **MT 1: 18-24 | Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David**

**Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 21**

*At the Crib we find the innocence, simplicity, gentleness and even weakness of a God who is capable of touching the hardest of hearts. ... There is no room for fear of a God who became a child*. We come to know a God who has pitched his tent in our midst, and whom we call ‘’brother.’’

**Intercessions**

Lord, you call us to be salt for the world. Give us your strength to confront unjust structures in the Church and the world. Lord hear us.

Lord, you call us to be light for the world. Give us your strength to demand accountability, transparency and honesty of those in authority in the Church and in public office. Lord hear us.

Lord, you call us to be yeast for the world. Give us your strength to proclaim the Good News through our words and actions. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Loving God,   
you are the light that gives light to our way.  
You are our hope as we await the coming of your Son.

May we like Mary have Jesus constantly in our hearts.  
Amen.

Advent 3 – Friday 19 December| Chosen by God

**O Radix Jesse**

Come O Flower of Jesse’s Stem,  
sign of God’s love for all his people,  
come to save us without delay. (Isaiah 11: 1, 10)

**Prayer** (*Dom Helder Camara*)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lord, do not smile and say  You are already with us. Millions do not know you, and to us who do, what is the difference?  What is the point of your presence if our lives do not alter? | Change our lives, shatter our complacency.  Make your word flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood, and our lives purpose.  Take away the quietness of a clear conscience, press us uncomfortably.  For only then, that other peace is made, your peace. Amen. |

**Readings**

* **Judges 13: 2-7, 24-25 | The birth of Samson was announced by an angel**
* **Psalm 71**
* **Luke 1: 5-25 | The birth of John the Baptist was announced by Gabriel**

**Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 60**

*God chooses individual men and women and calls each of them by name. He leads them into the desert and there he speaks to their hearts. … By his Spirit, he transforms them constantly leading them more deeply into his love in order to send them out on mission*. The more we come to know God, the more we come to know the deepest meaning of our lives. We grow in the knowledge that we are part of God’s project for the world.

**Intercessions**

Lord, comfort your people and clothe us with your compassion. Come to save us without delay.   
Lord hear us.

Lord, calm our anxieties, lighten the darkness that surrounds us. Come to save us without delay. Lord hear us.

Lord, surround us with your love and anoint us with your peace. Come to save us without delay. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

|  |  |
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| God of love,  we pray with a joyful heart that Jesus be born among us again this Christmas.  Instruct us in your ways of compassion  so that we may extend your love  and mercy to all people. | We ask this through Jesus Christ,  the Eternal Word,  who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen. |

Advent 3 – Saturday 20 December| The Call of Mary

**O Clavis David**

Come O Key of David,  
opening the gates of God’s eternal kingdom  
come and free the prisoners of darkness. (Isaiah 22: 22)

**Prayer**

God of life,  
we celebrate with joy your coming into our midst.

We celebrate with hope your coming into our midst.

We celebrate with peace your coming into our midst,  
for your coming to save us.

Free us from all that stands in the way of the coming of your Kingdom.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **Isaiah 7: 10-14 | The virgin shall conceive**
* **Psalm 24**
* **Luke 1: 26-38 | You are to conceive and bear a son**

**Marist Reading – He gave us the Name of Mary, p. 63**

Mary in the Annunciation is our model of openness to the Spirit, to whom she listens attentively in silence and to whose action she abandons herself. Like her, who treasured these things and pondered them in her heart, we seek to be contemplatives in action. Our prayer, faithful to Marist tradition, is simple, inserted into everyday life, but also with specific times of contemplation. We educate ourselves and others by cultivating interiority, and promoting sensitivity and openness to beauty.

**Intercessions**

Lord, show us how to be true witness of the Good News for all children of the world. Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray for families at that they may experience the love of the Holy Family. Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray that justice and compassion may flower in hearts that have grown cold. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Creator and Mighty God,   
you have promised strength for the weak,  
rest for the labourers,  
light for the way,  
and grace to meet the challenges of life.

Come and free us from all that prevents us  
centering our lives on Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Sunday Advent 4 – 21 December | Yes!

**O Oriens**

Come O Radiant Dawn,  
splendor of the eternal light, sun of justice,  
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness  
and the shadow of death. (Isaiah 9: 1)

**Prayer**

God of power and might  
you revealed the coming of Your Son  
into our world through the message of an angel.

May we attune our hearts to the many ways you enter our lives,  
and respond as Mary did to your invitation.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Readings**

* **Samuel 7:1-5, 8-11, 16 | The Lord will make the house of David secure forever**
* **Psalm 89**
* **Romans 16:25-27 | The mystery kept for endless ages is now made clear**
* **Luke 1:26-38 | You will conceive and bear a son**

**Marist Reading – In Her Arms or In Her Heart, p. 53**

Marcellin meant us to be apostolic religious in the way of Mary. What does that mean exactly? In the biblical texts, the mother of Jesus questions, pursues her son, gives orders, and travels. Actually, she travels a lot. Mary sets out “at once and in haste” to visit her cousin Elizabeth, makes the definitive pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and at Pentecost is part of the believing community into whom the Spirit of God breathes life and sends forth on mission. Yes, Mary’s story is characterized by movement, by passages from one moment of meaning to another.

Such an outlook is essential for anyone who claims membership in an apostolic Institute that bears her name. Unfortunately, some of us have come to resemble more the members of monastic congregations, with their commitment to a specific monastery and place. In contrast, we are meant to be itinerant, to move to those places where the need for evangelization is most urgent.

As a rural woman, she travelled beyond village boundaries to give birth to God among us and to serve as a witness to his salvific death. We, too, are called to go to those places where the Church is not, bearing God’s Good News to poor children and young people. Where we have lost this ability, we must restore it to its proper place in our lives.

**Intercessions**

We pray for the prophets in our midst who challenge us to read the signs of the times. Lord hear us.

We pray for all those who are sick and suffering at this time, may they experience your healing presence in their lives. Lord hear us.

We pray that broken relationships may be healed and restored. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

King of Kings and Lord of Lords,  
we wait in anticipation of your coming.  
Help us to prepare your way  
by straightening our hearts.  
Fill our hearts with your love and compassion  
that we may be instruments   
of your peace in our world.

Amen.

Advent 4 – Monday 22 December| Praise for God’s actions in our world

**O Rex Gentium**

Come O Desire of all the Nations,  
keystone of the Church,  
come and save us,   
whom you formed from the dust. (Isaiah 9: 5)

**Prayer**

God, our Father,   
may your kingdom come, your will be done:  
in our choices as we struggle with the complexities of our world,  
and confront greed and the desire for power in ourselves,  
our country and our world.

May your kingdom come this Advent.   
Amen.

**Readings**

* **1 Samuel 1: 24-28 | Anna gave thanks for the birth of Samuel**
* **Psalm 33**
* **Luke 1: 39-45 | Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord**

**Marist Reading – Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved, p. 10**

Keeping Mary in mind is equally important. At the Visitation, she carried Christ to John the Baptizer with simplicity, generosity, and charity; she presented him to the shepherds and the Magi in the same spirit. And Mary waited until the first signs of faith stirred among the apostles and then stepped aside so that the focus could fall on Jesus. We do well to heed her example and imitate her ways.

**Intercessions**

Creator God, open our eyes to the wonder and truth of the Word made flesh in Mary. Lord hear us.

Lord, open our minds to the beauty of the promise of new redeeming life when our Saviour is born. Lord hear us.

Loving Father, may we follow Christ as faithfully as Mary did, and keep to the path he shows us to the fullness of life. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Loving Father,  
we thank and praise you for blessing us with the great  
things which Mary proclaims in her *Magnificat*.

In your tender mercy you care for each one of us,  
and especially for those this world sees as lowly,   
the poor, weak, outcasts and marginalised.   
Help us to do all we can to bring these blessings  
to all whom we meet.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Advent 4 – Tuesday 23 December| We learn to say ‘Yes’

St John Kanty

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **O Emmanuel**  Come O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of the Law, come and save us, Lord our God.  (Isaiah 7: 14) | **Prayer**  Lord, as we come to celebrate  the birth of your Son, Jesus, we thank you for the gifts that you have given us.  We thank you for the example of Mary and Elizabeth in accepting your Word in their lives.  We thank you for the gift of the charism to Marcellin.  We thank you for our community and family.  Through Christ, our Lord.  Amen. |

**Readings**

* **Malachi 3: 1-4, 23-24 | I shall send the prophet Elijah as a sign that the day of the Lord is near**
* **Psalm 25**
* **Luke 1: 57-66 | The birth of John the Baptist**

**Marist Reading – Evangelisers in the Midst of Youth, pars. 67-68**

Creation continues throughout revelation. God introduces His Divine Presence to human beings from the first pages of the Bible and manifests His desire to establish a covenant with them. … [God] sends the prophets to remind us of the covenant entered into with God. The creative word of God is also the liberating Word of a God who inserts Himself in human history.

In the fullness of time God sent His only Son Jesus Christ. The Word of God became flesh to live among human beings. He came to put us in touch with that very God: “He who sees me sees the Father” (JN 16:9). He proclaims the Reign of God to all who find themselves “weary and downtrodden” - the poor, the sick, those rejected by mainstream religion, sinners, women and children. By His death and resurrection He transmitted divine life to all. In fact He had already proclaimed this: “I have come so they may have life and have it in abundance” (JN 10:10).

**Intercessions**

Lord, may our community share in the blessings of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Lord hear us.

Lord, may the virtues and blessings of the Holy Family be seen in the actions of the Champagnat Marist Family. Lord hear us.

Lord, give us the courage to spread your Good News among all those we encounter. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

God of love,   
we thank you for your servants, Mary and Elizabeth.

Their unconditional acceptance of your Word  
gave birth your kingdom of love, justice and peace.

We thank you for the blessings we have received through their actions.

Give us the grace to work for justice,  
that we may bring your love to those in need of healing.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Advent 4 – Wednesday 24 December| God with us

**Come, O Lord, and set us free**

**Prayer**

Emmanuel, “God with us”,  
like Zachariah of old, may we be conscious of your redeeming love  
and you meet you in those whom we encounter,  
in the Scriptures and the breaking of bread.

Amen.

**Readings**

* **2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 | The kingdom of David will be established forever in the sight of the Lord**
* **Psalm 89**
* **Luke 1: 67-79 | From on high the rising sun will visit us**

**Marist Reading – A Revolution of the Heart, p. 50**

The incarnational nature of Marcellin’s spirituality was the source of his practice of the presence of God; he had a passion for both the Lord and his mission. For Marcellin, Jesus was always close at hand. Consequently, his conversations with the Lord continued uninterrupted, and his confidence in him and abandonment to God’s will deepened over time. He often quoted the words of Psalm 127, “If the Lord does not build a house, in vain do its builders toil.”

Marcellin’s incarnational spirituality can be found in the wording of many of his letters. In an April 8th, 1839 note to Brother Marie-Laurent, for example, the founder wrote, “Your letter, my very dear friend, greatly aroused my compassion. Since then I never approach the holy altar without recommending you to Him in whom we never hope in vain, who can help us overcome the greatest obstacles.”

**Intercessions**

Loving God, help us to receive Jesus as Emmanuel and like John the Baptist, proclaim his message of peace. Lord hear us.

Gracious God, as you revealed your presence among us through Zachariah, may we too be aware of how actions give birth to an unfolding of God in our day. Lord hear us.

Mighty God, just as Zachariah announced the coming of a Messiah may we, by our joy in living, proclaim the coming of your Kingdom. Lord hear us.

**Prayer**

Father, reveal yourself to us so that we may know   
how to welcome you as you become present to us   
in the person of your new born Son, Jesus.

Help us to share the joy of his coming  
with all whom we meet today.

Come, Lord Jesus.