L

AY COMMUNITY

The term designates all forms of community integrating lay people who share the Marist charism and wish to live it out and promote it. The *Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family* started this experience of lay communities in the Institute using the term ‘fraternity’ to indicate the Movement’s basic unit, which gathers lay people who decide to live their vocation according to Marcellin Champagnat’s spirituality[[1]](#footnote-1).

A lay community is a space to share and enliven Marist ideals. Each member is responsible for the community spirit, and strives to live the family spirit that Champagnat left us. Like in the first Christian communities[[2]](#footnote-2), they share their human and spiritual gifts, and even material goods when the Lord invites them to do so.

In some parts of the Institute, these lay communities stemmed from the need to follow a discernment and growth process regarding the lay Marist vocation[[3]](#footnote-3) by sharing our vocational thirst and expectations with other community members. The lay community became a space to discern God’s call, to pray, study, find guidance, and assume responsibilities that generate life. Community life allowed a deeper experience of Marist spirituality, a more intense formation process together with the brothers, and a stronger emphasis on our apostolic and missionary dimension at the service of the Church[[4]](#footnote-4). We moved from an individual way of living the faith to the following of Jesus in community.



The lay community, like any group that wishes to undergo a process of Christian and Marist development, establishes a community life project, schedules the meetings, celebrates family events, assigns leadership roles and responsibilities, guarantees strong spiritual experiences, meets with the community of brothers, and promotes mission experiences.

1. Cf. *Life Project*, 22. Rome, 1990. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Province of Santa María de los Andes has developed such communities. Cf. the document from the Secretariat of Laity: *Vocational Process for Laity and Lay Marists.* Rome 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. *Itinerarios de crecimiento en la vocación marista laical. Un camino de discipulado cristiano marista* (Growth Itineraries for the lay Marist Vocation. A Path of Marist Christian Discipleship). Province of Santa María de los Andes. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)