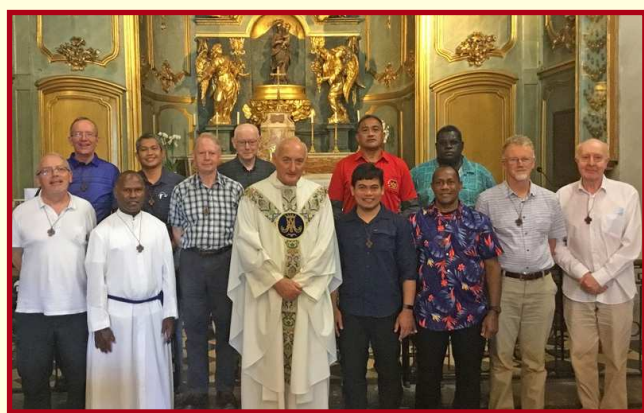


Reflection from the Superior General

Renewal: Living waters springing up to eternal life

Last week I found my way to La Neylière for the conclusion of the Colinian Renewal programme. Five months must have seemed a long time for our confreres at the beginning and even longer as they endured the effects of the virus which hit them hard. Last Friday each of them, along with the La Neylière community, renewed his vows at the foot of Our Lady of Fourvière in Lyons. It was a beautiful moment after all they have been through together over so long. Profound renewal cannot be rushed.

The Spirit shaped the life of the Son in the womb of Mary "in the fullness of time". We simply dispose ourselves to God's grace, patiently opening ourselves to the life of the Spirit over time. We never search for results, especially the "quick fix". To shape our hearts into the heart of Christ is the work of contemplative prayer in everyday life, true and on-going renewal, day after day, over a Marist life-time.



While in Lyons I was also delighted to visit some of our senior French confreres at Ste. Foy. These were all Marists who have endured the heat of the day and are rich in experience. I was captivated by their stories but even more taken by their wisdom as they reflected on their life experiences.

One of Mary's titles is "Mary, Seat of Wisdom". Wisdom dawns when we take the time to reflect on our personal experience and all that is happening in our world, "pondering in our hearts" the Word who speaks to us with each encounter and each event.

On returning to Rome I met with our young confreres who are completing their academic year, often having faced "Zoom classes" for months because of the virus. We can be proud of them. We have six young Marists who are graduating with their Licences, advanced qualifications in various theological disciplines, and seven Deacons about to begin their ministries in the Church wherever they may be sent.

They remind us of our own commitment to keep reading spiritually and studying theologically so as to be as professionally competent as we possibly can. Father Jean-Claude was very strong on this: "without knowledge I would have no faith in the Society; without knowledge it will be ruined. I intend to take every means to ensure that we acquire learning". (F.S. 109, 3 and 5). He wanted to ask each younger Marist to take two years "out" from ministry for full-time study, something we are trying to do these days.

On-going renewal for all of us involves daily lives of profound contemplative prayer, reflection on experience in the light of the Word, and both spiritual reading and theological study. Hopefully each of us seeks out regular spiritual direction and supervision for our professional lives that guide us along the path of on-going renewal.

Sometimes we meet serious obstacles to our inner growth, unhealthy and harmful patterns of behaviour that block the work of the Spirit. When this occurs, we need to seek out professional healers to help us through these barriers. It is better for everyone concerned that we act sooner rather than later.

On July 23 we celebrate the original pledge of our founders at Fourvière. Let's all of us renew our commitment to the Work of the Mary, a commitment we deepen each day as we are renewed constantly by the grace of God. These are the living waters springing up to eternal life.

Mary, Seat of Wisdom. Pray for us.

Our Lady of Fourvière. Pray for us.

John Larsen s.m.