



## MARIST VOCATION YEAR

1

### Questions for reflection and sharing:

- I review my own Marist vocation and compare it to Mary's vocation. How does her experience shed light on my own?
- When I think of my Marist life and of the future of the Society of Mary, how does my prayer translate Mary's question: "How shall this be?"
- How does Mary's Visitation experience help me to be a missionary of Christ, to offer the gift of Christ as Mary did?

## MARY'S VOCATION and Our Own Marist Vocation

### Read the Annunciation Narrative: Luke 1:26-38

In this Advent season, with Mary, we are getting ready for the coming of her Son. For Mary, this preparation began with her Immaculate Conception, the mystery we celebrate on December 8. On that day, Mary was transformed by God's grace. This is manifested by the way the angel Gabriel greeted Mary at the hour of the Annunciation: "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." (Luke 1:28) The Greek expression *kecharitômenè*, which we translate as favored one, indicates that Mary has been touched by a unique grace coming from God, a special gift at the hour of her conception. She was transformed by God's love and that bears permanent effects on her person. God's loving-kindness prepared her for a particular mission: to become Mother of the Son of God.

Mary was of modest origin. When Luke introduces John the Baptist's parents, he writes: "In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly." (Luke 1:5-6) And when he presents Mary's betrothed, he speaks of "a man named Joseph, of the house of David." (Luke 1:27) Mary for her part is not of prophetic or royal descent. Luke does not even say to which Israelite tribe does Mary belong. He only says about Mary that she is "a virgin" (Luke 1:27) and that she lives in "a town of Galilee called Nazareth." (Luke 2:26) This city is not even named once in the Old Testament. Let us recall Nathanael's reaction when Philip speaks to him about Jesus of Nazareth: "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (John 1:46)

Just like Mary, we are of modest origin. The words saint Paul writes to the Corinthians suit us well. "Consider your own calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and

God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God." (1 Cor 1,26-29)

However, just like Mary, we have been called by God, touched by his grace, transformed by the loving-kindness of our God and of Mary, mother of Jesus. Our Constitutions remind us of that. "A person enters the Society of Mary [...] sharing in the common vocation of the Society in his response to a call from God and a choice of Mary." (CSM § 33) Mary, "by a gracious choice (*delectu gratioso*) called them and gave them her name." (CSM § 144) Called by the Lord, Mary remained free to accept or to refuse the invitation. She asks the angel: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34 ASV) To ask: "How shall this be?" means that one believes that what was foretold will indeed happen. Mary's question is a question of faith. This shall be through the Holy Spirit who, just like the pillar of cloud of the time of exodus came down and covered the tent of meeting, will come down and shine around her.

Just like Mary, we had to discern our own calling, to allow the Spirit to guide us in our choice for life. Because we walked in her footsteps, we were able to say yes to our vocation. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) Just like Mary was, we are called to follow her Son every day of our lives, saying yes to his love, welcoming the Holy Spirit.

Once she said "yes" to the Lord, "Mary set out and travelled to the hill country in haste" to the house of Zechariah and Elizabeth. She was carrying Christ in herself and it is Christ who gave the Holy Spirit to John as he was still in his mother's womb. May we become like Mary, carrying Christ within us in order to give him to whomever we might encounter. May our loving answer to God inspire all those whom God our Father continues to call so that they will walk in his footsteps. May Mary continue to cover with her loving mantle all those she is giving her name as an inheritance.

Yvan Mathieu, s.m.



#### Deepening our friendship with Jesus

- Asking for an interior knowledge of Christ who for me became man in order to love him more and make him loved and served. (cf. Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola)
- Let us be touched when we realize that Christ has made us joint heirs with him, he is the eldest of a multitude of sisters and brothers. Let us welcome into the hollow of our hearts these words of adoption from the Heavenly Father: *"You are my daughter, my son, you have all my love"*.
- Let yourself be led by God, let yourself be educated by the Holy Spirit.
- Pray more for missionary vocations in the Society of Mary and whole catholic church.
- Engage in daily life to announce the Good News by testimony of life and good deeds for the greater Glory of God and the honour of Mary.

#### Imitate the virtues of our Lord (Secuela Christi)

- Look at Jesus in the crowd.
- He's waiting his turn like the others.
- One among others without prerogatives or privileges.
- He occupies the humble place from the baptism in the Jordan River until the washing of the feet.

*Louis Niyongabo, s.m.*



## MARIST VOCATION YEAR

# 2

## THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD, Our Own Baptism and the Missionary Mandate

The communication that we are going to make will follow three stages. First the baptism of Jesus and its meaning, then we will talk about our baptism as ordinary and religious Christians. Finally we will share on the implications of baptism in terms of the duties of the baptized and the missionary mandate.

### 1. The baptism of the Lord

Three synoptic gospels record the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the Jordan. We find it in Matthew 3, 13-17; Mark 1, 9-11; Luke 3, 21-22.

Let's take Mark's story, which is the more primitive of the other two. *"In those days Jesus came from Nazareth, a city of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens tear apart and the Spirit descend upon him like a dove. There was a voice from heaven: 'You are my beloved Son; in you I find my joy'".* (Mk 1, 9-11)

#### 1.1. What does this baptism of Jesus mean for us Christians and Marists?

The immersion of Jesus in the Jordan as it is described by Saint Mark has a connection with the sin of humanity. The theology that is developing within Christianity sees in the baptism of Jesus a will of Jesus Christ to take charge of the sin of the world.

If Jesus is the son of God, the holy of holies, why is he baptized like everyone else? The answer to this question is found in the Gospels. They say that at the baptism of Jesus, heaven opens. This means that the link between God and men is reestablished. The proof: the Spirit descends on Jesus. Now the Kingdom is among men, the son can reveal the true face of God. The voice of the Father testifies on behalf of the Son: *"you are my beloved Son, in you I find my joy!"* The baptism of water received by Jesus then makes sense: it prefigures the hour of the cross when, out of love for us and in trust in his Father, Jesus will cross the waters of death and sin to make us live on his divine life.

A French theologian explains even better the meaning of this baptism: *"Jesus does not need the baptism of John the Baptist, which was a sign of repentance, he who is without sin, nor of a gift of the Spirit, since he is the Son of God since always and therefore possesses the Spirit in fullness. But, by this sign, Jesus is united with us and gives us the gift of baptism: it is He who baptizes in the Spirit so that we may be 'one' with him in his resurrected humanity."* (Bernasseau, 2020)

### 1.2. Baptism of solidarity

Jesus' baptism of solidarity strengthens us and validates our baptism which cleanses us from original sin. Solidarity according to the Latin etymology "solidus" means: whole, consistent, bond between them the debtors of a sum. Solidarity is the feeling of responsibility and reciprocal dependence within a group of people who are morally obligated to each other. The baptism of Jesus makes us, who are sinners from the womb, strong and responsible. His baptism makes us sons of the same Father called to build, in solidarity, the Kingdom where all are one.

### 2. The baptism of the Christian, duties of the baptized and missionary mandate

According to the catechism of the Catholic Church: to baptize (in Greek *baptizein*) means to dive, to immerse; the diving in water symbolizes the burial of the catechumen in the death of Christ from which he leaves by the resurrection with him as "new creature." (CCC 1214). This sacrament is also called "the bath of regeneration and renovation in the Holy Spirit" (Tt 3:5), because it signifies and brings about this birth of water and of the Spirit - without which "no one can enter the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3,5). (CCC.1215) - Baptism makes us priests, prophets and kings like Christ. By baptism the Christian receives the missionary mandate from Christ himself. "Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you every day, until the end of the world" (Mt 28, 19-20).

The missionary mandate given to the baptized is inherent in the history of the Church. We are called to bear witness to the hope that dwells in us. As Saint Paul says: "Faith is born of what we hear; and what is heard is the word of Christ." (Rm 10:17). Now, for there to be listening, there must be messengers who proclaim this Good News. To be a Christian and a Marist is to put our hand to the plow and set out to follow Christ.

Speaking to Marists engaged in the education of young people in 1842, Colin he said, *"I would like all Marists to be like lamps burning brightly. Prepare yourself well in your solitude. We must draw on the fire of charity in the heart of Jesus and in the heart of Mary."* (Founder Speaks, Doc.49, &1.)

### Conclusion and resolutions

The time of baptism that we have received in the name of Jesus configures us to Christ the King, Priest and Prophet. We are therefore free and responsible and Jesus is counting on us to continue building the Kingdom of God. The missionary mandate that Jesus left with the apostles continues due to the commitment of each baptized person. Ultimately it is up to us to:



## MARIST VOCATION YEAR

# 3

### To go to Nazareth.

We do not need planes or trains. God is hidden in the space we live in. As Marists we invite you to come and to be silent and to place yourself in God's presence. God is calling. God will speak to your heart, your qualities, your gifts, your talents.

### Nazareth.

That is a space. It is the house – your house. It is the village or town – your village or town. During February, look at your house and town as a Loreto. Different Marist houses were called Loreto. To live the spiritual meaning of Nazareth in our day: live with the mystery in the midst of your life as Mary and Joseph did.

*Alois Greiler, s.m.*

## ENTER THE SACRED SPACE: Nazareth and Marist Spirituality

Have you been to Nazareth? Father Colin invites us to go there. However, he is not thinking of actual travel and visit, not even a pilgrimage. Colin sees Nazareth as a spiritual anchor for Marist spirituality.

In fact, Colin's furthest away foreign travel took him to – Nazareth, the house of the Holy Family in Loreto near Ancona, Italy. In 1833 he went there on purpose, together with Fathers Bourdin and Chanel. The latter had to return to Belley for school but Colin stayed longer for a personal retreat. It meant so much to him to stay and pray in the space at the time believed to be the house of the Holy Family.

Nazareth in the thinking of Father Colin is a rich theme with a certain development and is studied by many Marists. This development reflects a growing maturity in Colin's life and a shift in emphasis for the Marist spirit. In younger years drawn to a life in solitude and prayer, Colin learnt to understand that his vocation is to be a founder of an active congregation and so to assist others on their spiritual journey. From 'Nazareth' as a contemplative branch or at least houses of retreat, Colin finally invited all Marists to find the balance of prayer and action, contemplation and mission within their own lives.

My little contribution is not a summary of all that but a reflection which may or may not help to do what Colin recommended and to discover why he did so: Place yourself spiritually in Nazareth and from there you will know what to do.

With Pope Paul VI I want to say: Let us go to the School of Nazareth and learn from the original source. For him, Mary is the teacher. Pope John Paul II highlighted Saint Joseph – Guardian of the Redeemer, guardian of the mystery. Pope Francis also focuses on Saint Joseph – with the heart of a father. Like Colin, they also invite us to begin at the beginning.

Already in his 1842 Constitutions Colin writes, as it once was in Nazareth, so let it be in the Society of Mary today: Jesus is in our midst. We are called to see God's presence, to guard it and to share it like Mary and Joseph did and in the way they did – the Marist way.

### **To guard the mystery.**

Coste wrote about Colin's understanding of hidden and unknown and applied it to a modern world – where God often is hidden and unknown. As Marists, we guard this mystery of God's hidden presence. In silence and adoration we kneel before this mystery and draw our vocation from it and encourage others to go to 'Nazareth'.

### **To share the mystery.**

Colin asks us not to be a hindrance for others to become aware of the hidden God in their life and in this world but a help. There is the unobtrusive manner of the Marist way of doing things. Like Mary, at the same time discrete and full of zeal: The aim of the Society is to imitate the blessed Virgin, who was at once so unassuming and so full of zeal for the salvation of the world, working for it in silence. (A Founder Speaks, doc. 1, November 1837)



For the Marists, the first one who followed Christ in his 'self-emptying' was Mary. She did not claim the right to be honoured and glorified as his mother, but accepted obscurity. She was content not to be seen and made 'no noise', as Fr. Colin liked to say. In other words, she remained 'hidden and unknown'. Or, to quote Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort: 'Mary is God's echo. When we call out to her, "Mary", she answers, "God".'

Here is the pattern for the Marists. In the last analysis, Colin, in recommending the 'hidden and unknown', wants us to empty ourselves of our egos, ambitions, sensitivities, our self-seeking and our self-regard. We will thus create an interior space, so that, as far as possible, there are only Jesus, his Father and their Spirit living in us and working through us. To live 'hidden and unknown' is to live with outstretched empty hands, able to receive and to pass on, but not to grasp.

*Justin Taylor, s.m.*



## MARIST VOCATION YEAR

# 4

## HIDDEN AND UNKNOWN As the Heart Attitude to Be Present in Our Life

If a Marist is talking about Marist spirituality, it will not be long before the phrase 'Hidden and Unknown' will occur. This expression seems to sum up so much that is characteristic of the Marist approach. It was frequently on the lips of the Founder and occurs many times in his writings, sometimes referring to the individual Marist, sometimes to Marists in general. In the Constitutions that Fr Colin left to the Society of Mary, he wrote a section (Article 50) on 'The Spirit of the Society' that describes a number of key qualities of Marist life and rises to this climax: 'Let them [so combine] a love of solitude and silence and the practice of the hidden virtues with works of zeal, that even though they must undertake the various ministries helpful to the advance of souls, they seem to be unknown and indeed even hidden in this world.'

'Hidden and unknown' is not the motto of the Society: it is not a Marist's object in life to remain hidden and unknown. Rather that is a quality that should imbue the Marist's whole life, form his or her heart and shape their approach to their ministry and indeed to everything they do. But what does it mean? That is not self-evident, and the phrase can be misunderstood. In the last sixty years or so, much has been written about 'hidden and unknown' as a way of entering into dialogue with the modern world and with the women and men of today. It is also, and perhaps in first place, an attitude of heart, the key to a spirituality that may be the Society's principal gift to our Church and indeed to the world. That attitude of heart shapes the Marist response to the call to walk with Jesus and to be sent in Jesus' name.

It may come as a shock to Marists to be told that the expression 'hidden and unknown' was not coined by Fr Colin. It is in fact a phrase that occurred quite frequently in the sort of spiritual reading that was familiar to him and his contemporaries. Its pedigree is even older. In his Letter to the Colossians 3:3, Paul writes: 'You have died, and the life you have is hidden with Christ in God.' This is the origin of the idea of the 'hidden life', which is a frequent theme in spiritual writing. It is supplemented by meditation on the 'hidden life' of Jesus at Nazareth before the beginning of his public ministry. Indeed, even God himself is 'hidden', according to Isaiah 45:15.

With Jean-Claude Colin, however, the words 'hidden and unknown' are placed in relation to the world. In classic spirituality, the point was frequently to be hidden from the world. For Fr Colin, on the other hand, as we saw in the quotation from his Constitutions, Marists are to be 'hidden and unknown in this world'. The words therefore prescribe a way of being present – and indeed active – in the world.

There is a parable told by Jesus that seems to express well what is meant. This is the parable of the yeast, or leaven, that a baker hides inside the lump of dough (Matthew 13:33 and Luke 13:20-21). The leaven remains unseen, yet the living organisms within it affect the whole quantity, causing it to 'rise'. (Indeed, if the leaven remained on top of the lump to be seen, it would remain inert and useless.)

Another passage of Scripture that throws light on what Fr Colin meant when he used the words 'hidden and unknown' is one in which the words themselves do not occur. This is the great hymn in St Paul's Letter to the Philippians, chapter 2: *'Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.'*

The essential words in this passage, which help us to understand the 'hidden and unknown' are: 'he emptied himself'. Paul's meaning is this: Jesus had a right to be treated with divine honours during his lifetime on earth but, far from grasping at them, he renounced them and accepted to be treated as an ordinary human being. He followed out the logic of this choice even to a painful and humiliating death.

According to St Paul, Jesus' self-emptying is an example for every Christian, who should have 'the same mind' as Christ Jesus. That is, being prepared not to regard even something to which one has a right as 'a thing to be grasped'. Far from seeking power or prestige, those who want to follow Christ should rather 'humble themselves' – let us say, be content with the lowest place – and become obedient.



Living our Marist vocation with passion cannot be completed without the Marist laity. We tend to leave it to the margin but it is central to the original vision of the Society that it must be a tree of many branches. Jan Snijders asserted in his address to lay Marists in France that the commitment of men, women, ordained priests, lay people, religious and people living married life and secular profession, all to the same mission of embodying Mary's intervention in this present age is part of the core of the original Marist vision. It may have been found unworkable but that should not stop us trying to grow together and rediscover our common mission, common undertaking – the WORK OF MARY, a common superior, a common message, a common approach, and a common desire. And that is the body that Jean Coste pointed out that we may have become too indifferent to and instead, concentrating rather on the spirit. And, of course, when the body is separated from the spirit, it is called death. He observed an encouraging phenomenon of the interest that the laity is showing towards the Marist society, and they are attracted to the Marists through the contact they have with Marist communities, the body that make the spirit visible. And, without that body, the laity would find no point of reference.

To conclude, perhaps this story of Dr Albert Einstein may sum up the need to have a sense of mission, a sense of a call as exhibited by the early Marists and what this sense of mission means for the present Marists and those whom the Marists will attract. Dr Einstein was teaching in the Oxford University in 1942. He has just given out an exam paper to his senior physic class. As they walked through the campus, his assistant asked him, "Dr Einstein, that physic exam paper you just gave your senior physic class. Isn't that the same exam paper you gave the same class last year?" "Yes, Yes. It is exactly the same," he answered. "But Dr, how can you possibly do that?" "Well," Dr Einstein responded, "THE ANSWERS HAVE CHANGED."

*Justin Ratsi, s.m.*



## MARIST VOCATION YEAR

# 5

## Living MARIST VOCATION with Passion

*"I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth." (Lk 1:38-40)*

“Living the Marist Vocation with Passion” is about living the Marist life with a keen sense of mission. This sense of mission is the barometer of the vitality of the Church and of each individual Christian and religious community. Looking back into the beginning of the Society, it was this sense of mission that drove Jean-Claude Colin and the other Marist founders to establish the Marist project. It was the same sense of mission that drove the young seminarians in Lyon to climb the hill of Fourviere in responding to Mary’s mission, “Here is what I want.” Former Superior General John Jago referred to these men of Fourviere as men available and “men on fire”. It was that “fire” that not long after the first profession in the Society of Mary that St Peter Chanel together with Bishop Pompallier, the first Bishop of the Vicariate of Western Oceania, three other priests and three brothers set out, the first group of over 700 Marists to the vast unknown Oceania, on the Christmas eve of 1836. Lay women and sisters followed in their footsteps later.

In the Mayet Memoirs the theme of Mary supporting the Church in the beginning and at the end of time has always led Colin to a sense of mission. A realization that Marists have a job to do, urgently, in the world – for the salvation of souls at the end of time. In his circular letter, “Light from our origin,” the former Superior General, John Hannan sm exhorted all to live the Marist life and mission with passion by drawing from the rich roots of the Society. Recently, as we are getting more familiar with the life and teaching of our Founder, the Superior General, John Larsen, anticipated this as an opportunity for Marists to have a renewed sense of identity and a sense of mission.

Therefore, in living out our Marist Vocation in this secular world, with passion, it is imperative to rediscover what is this sense of mission shared by the Marist Founders, St Peter Chanel and the Marist missionaries to Oceania can drive a passionate living-out of the Marist vocation in community, driving careful vocation promotion and recruitment, and purposeful collaboration with the Marist laity.

A “sense of mission” is defined as the emotional attachment made towards the mission of an organisation. The attachment occurs when there is a match between the values of the organization and that of the individual. Achieving the mission of the organization can only happen when there is a sense of mission throughout the organization. Even though it is highly unlikely that a 100% of the members will have the sense of mission but it will surely increase as the mission of the Society is implemented and embedded in its culture, and careful recruitment for values compatible with the values of the Society. The chemistry of the value of the individuals and the value of the Society is clearly expressed in Constitution 34: *The process of becoming a Marist must take account of two elements: the common vocation of the Society and the individual’s personal vocation. At each step of formation, one is confronted by the interplay of these two elements.*

When he was still a young boy Peter Chanel, through reading letters of missionaries abroad sent back home, valued missionary work so much, and wanted to emulate them, “I will become a missionary priest,” he pledged. After his ordination on 15th of July 1827 he volunteered to be a missionary but instead was told to look after a parish. His keen sense of mission outside of France led him to Jean Claude Colin and the Marists. He helped Colin in the efforts for the Society of Mary to be accepted by Rome. When it happened on the 29th of April 1836 Peter Chanel was the first to put up his hands to be in the first group of Marist missionaries for Oceania, therefore, realizing his dream to be a missionary.

Peter Chanel valued Mary so much that in his ordination he chose her as his personal motto, “to love Mary and bring others to love.” He believed that the way to Jesus, the way to bring others to Jesus, the way to be a true missionary is through Mary. Therefore, it was not a coincidence that his keen sense of Mary’s role in evangelization brought him to her Society where in the words of Constitution 23, he “learns from him (Colin) and like him from Mary, how to approach the work of evangelization ...Fired with apostolic zeal for the Kingdom...” So, learning from Mary especially her presence in Nazareth and the Pentecost, Peter Chanel and all Marists will do great things for the Lord and they seem to be unknown and hidden. So “they must think as Mary, judge as Mary, feel and act as Mary in all things, otherwise they will be unworthy and degenerate sons” (Colin’s words in Constitution 228). In that way, constitution 92 affirms that “...the Society of Mary, generation by generation, becomes a reality in the world and its members know the joy that comes from a whole-hearted response to their vocation.”

Becoming a missionary under the banner of Mary as the underpinning values became the underlying sense of mission that drove Peter Chanel to Oceania. This sense of mission was shared and valued by the 756 deceased missionaries who were with Chanel and who were following afterwards from 1836 up to the last two decades of the last millennium. Most of the missionaries left for Oceania shortly after their profession or ordination either in the same year or a year after. It highlights the keen sense of mission and urgency to achieve the mission entrusted to the Society of Mary in 1936. This sense of mission has led to a crown of martyrdom, and according to “Alive in Memory”, 50 missionaries met their death with courage in the hands of the indigenous, some through leprosy, some were lost at sea and in accidents. There were 60 missionaries who died under the age of 35. Many of the missionaries who met their death later in their missionary years died due to some sort of illnesses. Some did manage to return to their home province for treatment and but many stayed on in the islands and died where they were. The witness of their lives became seeds for the growth of both the local church and the vocations to priests and religious life in Oceania.



### 3. SHARING

- Share something relevant from the contemplation exercise with Mary proposed above.
- Try to identify which are the action verbs with which you have identified the most because you have conjugated them more in your history as a Marist.
- Try to remember how Mary has been present in your personal story. Pick a meaningful experience to share.
- In the midst of the daily events of your life and the process of consolidating the mission and Marist charism, how do you make alive the memory that you are freely chosen to be part of the Family of Mary and to bear her name?
- What is the role that Mary could still play in your own vocation to reach the best Marist version of yourself?
- Meditative reading of the Magnificat with "Marist touch". (Unknown author - based on a Marist source). (You can find it attached).

*Silvia Sanz, s.m.*

## MARIST VOCATION YEAR

6

## MARY in Our Own Vocation

### What is the role of Mary in my Marist vocation?

*"For the Marist Sisters, Mary is the person who unites them in a family in Christ and she is the one who reveals to them the full meaning of her vocation."* (No. 2 Constitutions).

**For us, Marists, MARY is:** The one who unites us... She unites us as members of a Congregation, of a spiritual Family and as members of the universal Church united and in a state of mission. The one who lets herself be watched... The one that inspires our action... **The one that REVEALS us THE COMPLETE MEANING OF OUR VOCATION...**

In order to understand the full meaning that is revealed to us by the person of Mary, we feel invited to the attitude of **SILENCE**:

Silence to meditate, meditate contemplating it, contemplate and ponder it, ponder breathing her spirit, breathe her spirit and let yourself be filled, let yourself be filled with her spirit, to imitate her.

**"Strive constantly to breathe her spirit" (ES)**

### 1. CONTEMPLATING

*"It is said that we become what we contemplate."*

Contemplating Mary, and dedicating moments of our day to day being with her, we will thus grow daily in a more intimate relationship with her and with hers, her son, Jesus.

*"Therefore, we all are looking openly as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are transformed from glory to glory in the same image, as by the Spirit of the Lord."* (2 Corinthians 3:18)

**Desire:** (Individual reading)

I want to contemplate you, Mary, let you reveal to me the meaning of my vocation, the deep desire to respond with what I am to the love of God.

**Desire:** (Individual reading)

I want to contemplate you, Mary, to do so brings me closer to your Son Jesus. And it is with your spirit that I want to follow him every day of my life.

### PRACTICAL EXERCISE of CONTEMPLATION

It is a call to a constant practice, which requires dedicating time, intentionality, constant effort, established routine. A practice to be done frequently, not as something that is done once and then forgotten. In order to bear fruit, a certain constancy and consistency is required. Assume this as a habit and practice in our experience of the Marist vocation: Surprise ourselves in recurring moments contemplating Mary.

**SONG:** "Mary, let us contemplate you, and thus, breathe your spirit."  
(You can access the attached video: <https://youtu.be/go6eSm5mgz0>)

Choose an image, photo, painting, of Mary and spend 5 minutes contemplating without paying attention to ideas, concepts or elaborate descriptions. Just try to look at it and identify the experience that evokes you.

### 2. MEDITATING

As Marists we have been called to CONJUGATE MARY's action verbs and make them ours; make her BEING AND MAKING our inspiration.

ANSWERING with your YES  
SINGING the Magnificat with you  
PROLONGING your YES  
SAYING your will Be done  
LISTENING from your heart.  
WAITING with your FAITH  
KEEPING your silence  
DOING your Work  
FOLLOWING your Son  
IMITATING your style  
LIVING your mercy  
Praying with your being  
SERVING with your joy

LOOKING with your goodness  
BELIEVING with your hope  
BREATHING your spirit  
WELCOMING with your mercy  
EDUCATING with your patience and love  
REMEMBERING your wish  
ACTING with your diligence  
THANKING your choice  
Bearing your name  
BUILDING your Family  
THINKING, JUDGING, FEELING  
AND WORKING like you.