

APRIL 8, 2024 - ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD
Marianist Family Patronal Feast Day A Day to celebrate our Marianist vocation.

Dear Family,

This year, during Eastertide, we celebrate the Annunciation of the Lord and our Patron Saint's Day.

We rejoice in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Alleluia!

> *Prayer can begin with a song from Eastertide.*

We want to give thanks for our Marianist vocation in the Church, for our Founders, for the call we have received to live the same spirituality in our different states of life through our consecration to Mary our Mother. Let us listen to this exhortation from Peter's epistle, and let it resonate within us:

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:4-5)

On this day of our patronal feast, the Alliance Mariale invites you to meditate on **Mary's YES**. With the **Angelus** prayer, we remember the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the womb of Mary.



V/. The Angel of the Lord brought the announcement to Mary,

R/. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary ..

V/. This is the Lord's servant,

R/. let it be done to me according to your word.

Hail Mary ..

V/. And the Word became flesh,

R/. and he dwelt among us.

Hail Mary ..

V/. Pray for us, Holy Mother of God,

R/. So that we may be made worthy the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAY. May your grace, Lord our Father, be poured into our hearts: through the angel's message, you have made known to us the Incarnation of your beloved Son; lead us through his passion and cross to the glory of the resurrection. Through Jesus, the Christ, our Lord.

We contemplate Mary, our Mother: by her YES to God, she is a model for every baptized person. Saying yes to God, what a responsibility! Mary responded in all humility to the Lord's call, abandoning herself to his will. For us Marianists, celebrating our common vocation means repeating our "YES" and our commitment to following Mary. Today, in a world faced with all kinds of calamities, wars and human suffering, Mary's "yes" is a cry of love and hope for life! The first on the road, Mary leads us in discretion, steadfastness and constancy through the events of life: in the big things and the little things!

We present ourselves to the Lord with the Virgin Mary, with the people of Israel, with the Church, repeating this psalm that Jesus Christ prayed and lived. We offer ourselves to Him for our fellow human beings.

PSALM 40 **Here I am, Lord, I have come to do your will.**

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear;
burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

Then I said: "Here I am;

"In the scroll of the book it is written of me.

I delight to do you will, O my God: your law is within my heart. "

I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation;

see, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord.

I have not hidden your saving help within my heart,

I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;

I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
from the great congregation.

(Biblical citations from NRSV)

For our meditation, here is a text by Fr. Serge Hospital, SM: Say YES.

Say YES

The goal of our journey is set: **to become ONE with Christ, Son of the Father, who became Son of Mary for the salvation of mankind.**

God himself sets to work to model us in the image of his Son: by giving us his Spirit and a Mother, Mary. In covenant with him, we can get down to work: saying YES to God's work by cooperating with him. It's a wholehearted YES, as our Founders advocated. Without this involvement of our whole person, in its unity, our spiritual life will remain lame.

1. Saying YES with your head

An oft-heard remark has always left me wondering: *Don't do something intellectual, stick to life!!* It's as if, when it comes to faith and the spiritual life, we had to forget God's gifts of intelligence, reason, judgment, discernment, memory - the whole mental zone that makes man a reasonable being. And all "intellectual" work is supported by the gifts of the Spirit, such as intelligence, counsel and wisdom. Saint Thomas Aquinas prayed thus: *"Give me penetration to understand, memory to retain, method and ease to learn, lucidity to interpret and abundant grace to express myself.* Intellectualism is to be avoided, as are all "-isms", which are a sign of sclerosis, even tyranny.

How do you say yes with your head? Two examples: the revealed truths expressed in the Creed. The intelligence of faith enables us to understand these truths, to see their implications for life, to confront them with other cultures, etc. An effort of intelligence. Another example: someone wants to become obedient like Christ. What does "obey" mean? This word is so full of partial or false images, of poorly assumed experiences, that our man runs the risk of wandering down paths that do not lead to the obedience of Christ. It's time to get informed and think things through. Is this not the attitude of the young Mary in her dialogue with the angel? *How will this happen?* " Or in the face of surprising events such as the loss of Jesus in the Temple? To be able to **say YES with your head**, it's essential to educate yourself. That's the first way recommended by our Founders. Father Chaminade spared no effort to instruct the Christians of all backgrounds who frequented La Madeleine, so convinced was he that faith had to be built on solid foundations. It's about understanding the spiritual life and its stages, understanding the path proposed to us by our Founders. However, having nice ideas about obedience is not yet being obedient! That's why it's essential to..

2. Say YES with your heart, moving from the head to the heart

Our times are marked by a resurgence of the affective, in reaction to an overly cerebral religion that shuns feelings. And I hear remarks like these: *i can't pray, I don't feel anything ; I feel that this is what God is calling me to do.* Just as we cannot reject the affective, since God touches us through his Word, we cannot make it the sole criterion of our relationship with God and our faith. Let's take our two examples again.

-By studying the Creed, I can understand that Jesus came "for us and for our salvation": God's promise in the first Covenant is fulfilled in Jesus. When this truth enters the heart, feelings of adoration, praise and repentance spring up. This truth is no longer a notion, it touches my existence. It becomes an experience: Jesus saves me, Jesus saves those around me.

- Christ's obedience becomes "desirable", and we find ourselves loving that obedience. Love becomes the powerful engine that sets us in motion. This passage from the head to the heart is achieved through prayer. This time when we give ourselves over to the Spirit, when the Word of God, like a seed, falls into the soil of our heart, germinates, grows and produces fruit. Imperceptibly, but surely. In prayer, the Father remodels us in the image of his Son by the breath of the Spirit. A good prayer is not one in which we develop sublime ideas, nor one in which we feel emotional heat, but one in which, as clay in the hands of the potter, we let him shape us into an obedient, humble heart... We can dissertate brilliantly on obedience, feel enthusiasm at the thought of doing the Father's will at all times, but what remains is practice!

3. Saying YES with your hands, in action

"Happy are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:28). Jesus attacked those who say and do not do. Father Chaminade spoke of "practical faith". To verify the incarnation of our faith in life, our Founders recommend a **spiritual examination**, which is not the same as an examination of conscience. It's not so much a question of passing moral judgement on our lives to discover what is sinful, as a moment when we welcome the light of the Spirit - to recognize God's visits and calls (what we have understood, what has touched us) and give thanks for them; - to see how we have responded: in what and how have I practiced obedience, in what and how have I not obeyed the Father? To build a future full of hope: tomorrow, with God's grace, how and in what will I obey? At a time when people are seeking to unify and balance their lives, these three points of attention help to meet this expectation. And the three ways we recommend will help you avoid many illusions and missteps.

Excerpt from: *Spiritual journey with our Founders*
Father Serge Hospital, SM (1940-2004) former novice master of France



Blessed Chaminade, in troubled times
you kept an unfailing faith in God and man.
Assured of God's faithfulness
in carrying out his plan of salvation for mankind,
you consecrated yourself to Mary,
the woman chosen by God
for his Son to take flesh in our humanity.
Never stop blessing us and watching over us.
Stimulate us to become a people of saints
whose lives reveal Christ,
a people of Mary's missionaries, happy to work like her
and with her to bring about the Kingdom.
May the Spirit who inspired you
instill in us the faith of the heart,
suggesting that we obey, in all our occupations,
Mary's words to the disciples:
"Do whatever He tells you!" "May the Father, the Son
and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places
through the Immaculate Virgin Mary". Amen.
**Prayer for the celebration of the Chaminade year in 2011*

Let us pray to Father CHAMINADE:

INTENTIONS OF PRAYER, *from the branch leaders of the Marianist family.*

We pray with the Marianist Lay Communities:

- For the fruits of regional meetings in Latin America and Europe, to be held in July and October 2024 respectively, to strengthen relations between the countries of each region and encourage discernment in the search for solutions to common challenges.
- Knowing how to respond to young people who feel called to live and share the Marianist charism, so that they can find in our lay communities' spaces of welcome, accompaniment and integral formation.

We pray with the Alliance Mariale:

- For the general assembly of our secular institute, which will take place between June and October. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us as we reflect on our priorities, define our directions and elect our General Council.
- For the members of the Alliance Mariale and the whole Marianist family, called to be, in the words of Father Chaminade, "the auxiliaries and instruments of the Blessed Virgin" in spreading the faith. Let us give thanks to God for associating us, in the diversity of our vocations, with Mary's mission for the world of this time.

We pray with the Marianist sisters, Daughters of Mary Immaculate:

- For the ongoing process of a new foundation for the **Agen** community, to revitalize that community where our Foundress, Blessed Marie de la Conception, lived.
- For the current revision of our Rule of Life in order to restructure the whole Congregation. We hope to renew the internal life of all the sisters and foster better communication and greater solidarity between the units thanks to this work.

We pray with the Marianist religious, Society of Mary:

- For the fruits of our General Chapter dedicated to "Pastoral care with and for young people within the Marianist Family" (July 5-27, 2024). So that we can understand today's young people, share our faith with them and involve them in our mission.
- For the creation of the Region of India on May 5; that this new Region may continue to strengthen its experience of Marianist life and mission for the good of all.

Our Father. Hail Mary. A decade of the Rosary..

Thanksgiving in union with the Virgin Mary. Regina Caeli

Regina Coeli, laetare, alleluia: quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia. Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia.
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia. (*Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia, for He whom you deserved to bear in your womb, alleluia, has risen as He said, alleluia, Pray to God for us, alleluia.*)