

MARIANIST FAMILY: WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

“WITNESSES PROMOTE VOCATIONS”

World Council of the Marianist Family

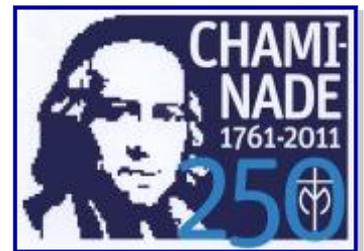
May 15, 2011

POTENTIAL VOCATIONS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER

On this day, the whole Church is invited by the Pope to pray for religious and priestly vocations. In the Marianist Family we unite ourselves to the prayer of the Church in the context of our own particular vocation.

April 24, 2011
Easter Sunday



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the final message of the World Council of the Marianist Family, in November 2009, we spoke of the efforts we are making in the Marianist Family to develop pastoral attention to vocations and to their promotion in all branches. In light of that reflection, we thought it necessary to support these efforts by uniting in prayer.

To do this, we had decided to ask the whole Marianist Family to pray in communion on the fourth Sunday of Easter. Each year in the Church, this Sunday is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. The idea is to come together, as we do in October for the Marianist World Day of Prayer, to pray with the whole Church for this intention, and especially for Marianist vocations.

At our November 2010 meeting, the World Council of the Marianist family thought that this initiative was valuable and wished to continue it. That is why, as the day approaches, we would like to renew this invitation and, as promised, offer you some guidelines and elements for reflection.

You will find attached:

- A few Marianist suggestions for prayer
- A new project on pastoral attention to vocations, initiated by the Marianist Family of Brazil.

These elements can help you develop celebrations and other projects according to the context. May the Lord hear our prayer.

Warmest regards.

The World Council of the Marianist Family

1. For Reflection...

We come today, Lord, to be with you and to pay attention to what you say to us in the Gospel. We want to pray with a sense of urgency, that there may be laborers for the harvest of the Church. We want to remain with you, calmly, in silence, savoring your Presence. We offer you our vocation. Thank you for your call. We know that you listen to us. We are here because you call us. You have called us in different ways within the Marianist Family: a diversity of vocations, sisters, brothers, lay people. During this time of prayer, we ask you to strengthen each of our vocations and to give us the gift of new vocations.

Various Prayers

- THE CHURCH'S SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS SUNDAY (see Page 5)
- TO MARY
- FOR MARIANIST VOCATIONS
- INTERCESSIONS FOR VOCATIONS

SOME TEXTS

Let us suggest some texts of Scripture or a few prayers that might go along with them:

Old Testament:

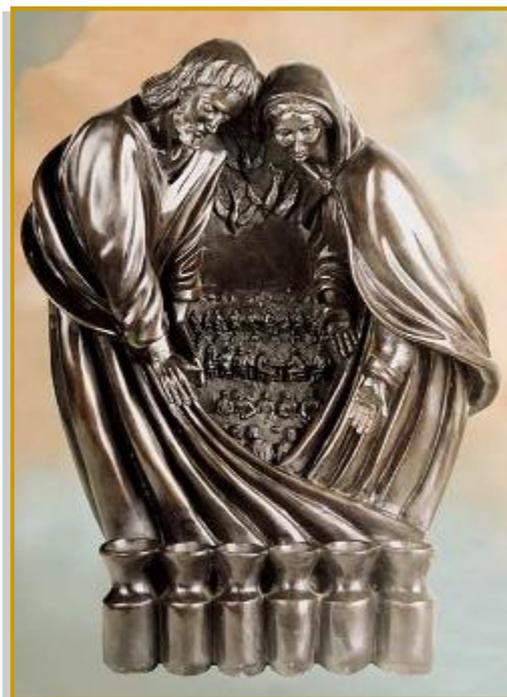
Isa 6:5-10
Jer 49:3, 5-6
Judg 4:4-10; 5:7, 12, 24
1 Sam 3:1-21
Jdt 8:11-12, 16-17, 20, 25-27; 9:11

New Testament:

1 John 4:16-19
Luke 5:27-32; 8:1-3; 9:23-25, 57-61; 10:1-11
John 15:13-17
Mark 3:13-14
1 Cor 1:1-3

To Mary

“We focus on Mary, and we recognize in her the perfect image of the missionary disciple. She urges us to ‘do whatever Jesus tells us’ (John 2:5) in order for Him to give his life. With her, we want to be mindful once more, to listen carefully to the Master, and, counting on her, once again accept the missionary mandate of her Son: ‘Go and make disciples of all the nations’ (Matt 28:19). We listen to her as a community of missionary disciples who have had a living encounter with Him and who want to share that incomparable joy every day with the others.” (No. 364 Concluding document of the Latin-American Episcopal Conference, Aparecida, Brazil, May 2007)



Our Lady of the Magnificat,
we have gathered to pray for vocations
in the different countries, languages, and cultures
where the gift received from our founders bears new fruit.

With you, we say thank you for the gift of our Marianist
vocation;
keep us faithful to that grace.



Our Lady of the Annunciation,
with you we say thank you for the Word that nourishes us day after day,
like manna in the desert.

With you, we want to welcome that word,
so that it may transform our lives and those of our communities.

Our Lady of Cana,
increase in us the desire for Jesus to be known and welcomed in today's world.
Open our eyes and ears to the needs of our brothers and sisters.
Make us women and men of faith, following your example, our feet firmly planted in reality,
happy to work in community to give life
and to bear the wine of true joy to those whom the Lord puts on our path.

Our Lady, standing at the foot of the Cross,
help us to keep the faith, to withstand hardships,
to cling always to hope,
because we are sure of the victory of life over death.

Our Lady of the Upper Room,
we give thanks with you for the missionary energy in the Marianist Family
that sparks missionary initiatives, filling us with hope.

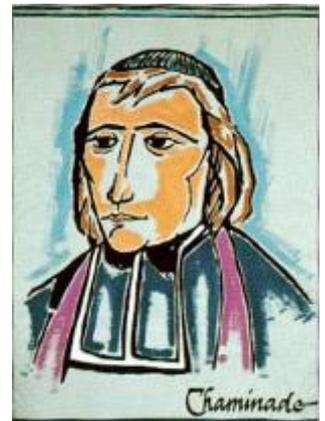
At the heart of this Family that belongs to you,
in communion with all its members,
today we put ourselves at your service,
sure that today is God's time,
and the "hour" of the Marianist Family in the Church and in the world.

(Adaptation of the concluding prayer of the FMI general chapter 2007)

Prayer for Marianist Vocations:

Members of one Family, we want to share our enthusiasm and our needs, our shortcomings and our desires. As you invited us to do in the Gospel, we want to pray without tiring, presenting to you our thanks, our requests, and our praise. We entrust them to you.

1. Lord, I lift up to you the missionary efforts of the Marianist religious. May your grace enrich them and grant the young people you have chosen the strength to respond quickly and generously.
2. Jesus, I present to you our sons and daughters. You called them into life and, through us, into faith. From now on, call them to what you have chosen for them, and may they be able to answer you thanks to our support.



3. I lift up to you, Lord, our home life, which is a response to your loving call. Continue to call us; we want to respond to you with the joy and generosity of a love renewed in the service of our children and of society.
4. Lord, I pray for all the young people preparing for religious life. May your love draw them ever closer to you. I pray for the newest communities, that you help them discern and affirm their Christian vocation.
5. ...
6. ...

Intercessions for Vocations

1. For all of us, that we might be attentive to the Lord's wishes, in order to do his will.
✦ **WE PRAY TO THE LORD**
2. For all people who are wondering about their vocation, that they might present themselves humbly before God and listen to what He is asking them.
✦ **WE PRAY TO THE LORD**
3. For those who have said "yes" to the Lord, that they may be consistent and continue to serve God.
✦ **WE PRAY TO THE LORD**
4. That God, Master of the Harvest, might send laborers for his harvest.
✦ **WE PRAY TO THE LORD**
5. For all of us, that we might draw closer to God and let him be the One who shows us the way.
✦ **WE PRAY TO THE LORD**
6. That we might follow the example of Mary, who all her life was attentive to God's signs, even if she didn't always understand.
✦ **WE PRAY TO THE LORD**
7. That God might support and bless all who listened to his call and decided to follow Him more closely.
✦ **WE US PRAY TO THE LORD**
8. For all people who have devoted their lives to God, as Mary did, that the Lord fill them with joy every day.
✦ **WE PRAY TO THE LORD**
9. That, enlightened by Mary's example and filled with generous love, the new generations might put their trust in the Lord and devote their lives to him.
✦ **WE PRAY TO THE LORD**
10. For the people given to others, and especially for missionaries, that the Lord help them and give them the strength they need to continue their work.
✦ **WE PRAY TO THE LORD**



2. A SUGGESTED WAY TO PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

On this day, the whole Church is invited by the Holy Father to pray for religious and priestly vocations. In the Marianist Family, let us unite our prayer to that of the Church from the perspective of our own vocation.

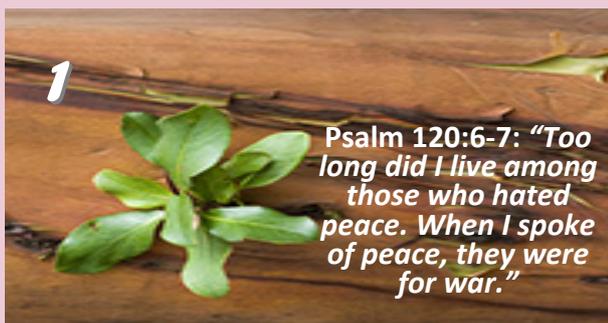
THE GIFT OF OUR VOCATION

This year, we suggest prayer based on the stories, shared in community, of some of our brothers and sisters' vocational calls and experiences.

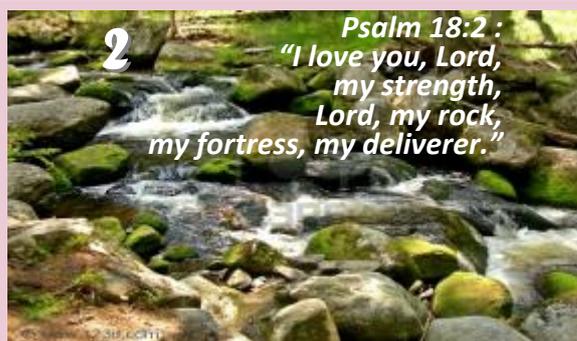
VOCATION AND RESISTANCE

To Resist:

1. To face up to a rival who often seems ready to crush us
2. As a rock that withstands running water (which also may smooth rough edges)
3. As a reed bends in a gust of wind but does not break.



What must you struggle with at this time in your life?
And in your faith life?



What helps you go on?
Where do you find your support, strength, motivation?



Who accompanies you on your path? Who helps you?
Whom do you trust? On whose shoulder do you cry?
With whom do you laugh?

Sharing Experiences

SOME TESTIMONIES:

Sharing our experience of vocation

*Selected excerpts from the forthcoming book *Vocation Experiences of Members of Different Branches of the Marianist Family**

1. There is no vocation without models...

“Since I believe that there is no vocation without ‘models,’ I am convinced that mine, at its origins, was marked by some very close (and dear) people who fully lived out this Marianist vocation. Fortunately, they communicated to me their enthusiasm and their confidence in that charism. If they’re happy this way, I thought, and they show it, I think I could be, too, by taking that path.”

2. ... to be a missionary and to change the world.

“Years ago, at the movies, I read a sentence from Edmund Burke that hasn’t stopped echoing in my mind: ‘All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.’ I had long lived half-heartedly, but reading that simple sentence was like pushing a start button and turning me on. No need to go very far to live out a mission, nor to go back in time. The mission was there, within reach. I just had to get to work at home, at work, with my acquaintances, my friends... True, it’s not what I had imagined as mission, as a way of changing the world, nor what I had dreamed of when I was young. But that doesn’t matter. I’m convinced that I’ve managed, at least up till now, to fulfill the two great dreams of my childhood: to be a missionary and to change the world.”

3. ... God chooses when and where to bestow his gifts.

“In my rather eventful life, I’ve had three decisive ‘covenant’ moments. The first was at 17 years old. As I entered the chapel, I was seized by an inexplicable anxiety while thinking about the future. Looking at Mary’s image gave me the resolution: “I have Mary with me,” I felt deep within myself. And the anxiety disappeared. The second was ten years later. Walking in the fields the night before my first Mass, in the starlight, I felt sure of the presence of Christ and Mary. That was like the renewal of the covenant: they with me, and I with them, forever. The third was at Karanga (Malawi 1978): the height of the covenant is to feel like the son of the Father, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and, for me, in the Society that belongs to Mary in the Church... God chooses when and where to bestow his gifts.”



3. ... we are all responsible for the mission of spreading Jesus' message.

“Since I was at university, I have been in touch with the State Communities of Mary Immaculate, and, ever since, I’ve been united to that big family, formed by we who are confident in the Christianity professed by Father Chaminade. Since that time, community has been a vital necessity. Since then, too, and thanks to that community membership, I have become convinced that we are all responsible for the mission of spreading Jesus’ message.

“The community has allowed me to learn about and understand the words and actions of Jesus, but also to discover the good and bad in myself. It has helped me become aware of my odd contradictions. It has showed me the consequences of my actions and brought me closer to the suffering of others.

“So, as Father Chaminade began to spread his thinking by creating communities, I think this idea is more necessary than ever today, because it’s the only way out of the unhappiness created in us by the individualism dominant in our society. I sincerely believe that we are all missionaries, but only within and starting from the community.”

4. “The essential is the interior.”

“*The essential is the interior,*’ because if my prayer is continuous, in silence, of the heart and not of the mind, then peace comes to my heart, the fatigue lightens, my aggravation eases, problems are put in perspective, my joy is greater and I feel happier. Because of this, my daughters are happy with me, I’m a better husband. Because of this, I have a kind word for a colleague at school, and a comment that helps the student who needs me. Because of this, and without it being too visible, I seem a little more like Christ. Isn’t that what matters? Stop praying, and it all comes back – the aggravation, the fatigue, the selfishness. That’s why *the essential is the interior.* I only have to be; the rest is Christ’s affair.”

5. ... absolute awareness of the historical moment.

“I discovered that it was a ‘modern’ charism, not in the sense of being revolutionary but in the way it sees the reality of the world, of society, of young people. We quickly learned that the founder was a brave man who had confronted the reality around him in order to be authentic. And he was able to offer a response to his Church’s reality, ‘his response.’ For me, this feature of the charism is crucial. I cannot imagine another way to be in the world, except with absolute awareness of the historical moment. This seems to me to be the key to understanding reality, and necessary for responding to the needs that come up and that we decide to get involved with, necessary for carrying out the projects we undertake in order to contribute a grain of sand to improving things.”



6. Fostering the treasure that the Lord has put in us.

“Of all the intuitions that Father Chaminade left us, perhaps the one that touches my heart the most right now is this: ‘The essential is the interior.’ Sometimes, we get so involved in the mission, with work, with others, that we forget to take care of our interior, to foster the treasure that the Lord has put in us, to water the seeds meant to sprout and allow a tall, strong plant to grow. It’s crucial to take care of our interior, to look after our relationship with God, to love ourselves...so as to be able to give our life in doing the same thing for others, taking care of their interior.”

7. Seeing us united and happy...

“What attracts attention and is good for everyone, is seeing us together on mission as the Marianist family: typically, the group is made up of sisters, brothers, a priest, and lay people. People see how close we are, and when we share something of our charism, they are surprised to realize that those who make up a mission team don’t all live together and even come from different places. Seeing us so united and happy is a testimony for people, and they ask us about how we live religious and lay life.

“What’s important in this experience is that today, like two hundred years ago, we live out that family spirit that our founders so dreamed of. We carry out the mission in union without confusion.”

8. “at your command, I will lower the nets.”

“*‘Do whatever He tells you’* has been one of the key principles that has guided me and continues to guide me on my path up to now. Supported by that motto, I’ve received and accepted many and varied missions (in education, administration, etc. in diverse countries). How many times have I perceived a mission entrusted to me as beyond my powers, but by welcoming it in prayer with the help of Mary, and by contributing my abilities, I launched into it with faith and confidence: *‘at your command, I will lower the nets.’*”

“This *‘Do whatever He tells you’* has often invited me to ‘pull up camp’ from where I felt comfortable, to set out for other horizons, for unknown missions.”

9. ... strength comes from the “yes” that puts me in God’s hands...

“When I said ‘yes,’ I had a feeling that it wouldn’t be easy, but I didn’t think too much about it. Like Mary, I hung on to it – what I didn’t know, was that this ‘yes’ hung on to me.

“That obedience to God, far from enslaving or alienating me, freed me because it forced me to confront difficult situations that I hadn’t thought myself capable of confronting; and I feel that that strength comes from the ‘yes’ that puts me in God’s hands, like Mary, and allows me to overcome my weaknesses; it makes me grow personally and spiritually.”

QUESTION

What distinctive features of the Marianist vocation have you found in these stories?

3. THE MARIANIST FAMILY OF BRAZIL AND VOCATIONS: A new project

In the context of the Marianist Family's prayer and pastoral work for vocations, we present a project that Brazil has just planned. Knowing about the initiatives in different countries can serve as a stimulus and help to promote collaboration in this area so important to our common mission.

PASTORAL VOCATIONAL PROJECT MARIANIST FAMILY OF BRAZIL

Objective

- To be among young people, allowing them to know Christ, the Son of God, who became the Son of Mary.
- To emphasize our Founders' legacy: to be witnesses of life communities that are open to welcoming others and to making themselves known, thus being life communities that are visible and accessible, and that educate people in faith for the service of the Church.

***"The vocation, the liberty and the originality of each person are gifts from God for the fulfillment and service of the world."
(D.A, 111)***

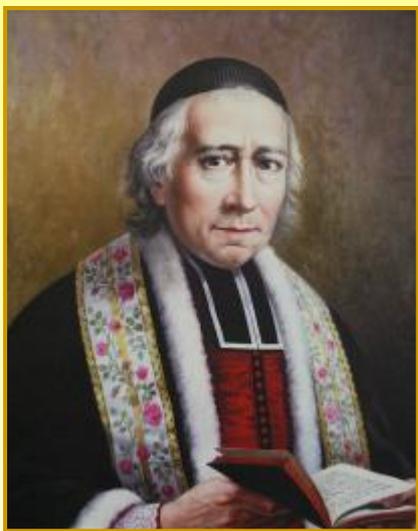
Priorities

- "Our mission in the Church and in the world must be lived out in the Marianist Family. To be and act as a Family, we must live in communion." (D.P. I.5)
- The Marianist vocations team seeks to deepen its understanding of the spirituality of vocation, through study, sharing, and mission.
- To be or work among young people, letting them know that Jesus walks beside them as he walked with the disciples of Emmaus, listening, conversing, and guiding.
- To raise awareness in the communities of young people and adults that vocations are the responsibility of all Christians. We are all invited to call others, to understand that each Christian has his or her own specific vocation.

Means

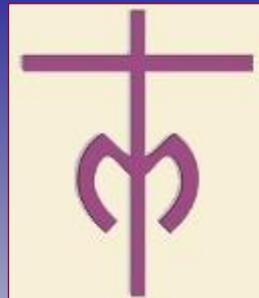
- Make a vocational flyer for the Family.
- Participate in vocation meetings on the Web page www.marianistasbrasil.org
- Participate in vocation meetings: Eucharistic celebrations; vocation meetings in Marilia February 26 and 27, Good Shepherd Sunday
- Carnival retreat – State Communities of Mary – in Campinas, March 4 to 8, 2011
- Family youth walk – in July – Commemoration of the Year of Chaminade
- Inter-congregation mission, July 5 to 12, 2011 in San Roque de Minas
- Offer "vocation awareness" meetings to groups of young people during confirmation classes at Holy Family parish, Campinas.

"Faith liberates us from the isolation of 'me,' because it carries us into communion. That means that an integral dimension of the Christian is belonging to a real community in which we can have constant experiences of discipleship and communion...(with the Church)." (D.A, 156)



“Our work is great, it is magnificent. It is universal because we are the missionaries of Mary, who told us: Do whatever he tells you! Yes, we are all missionaries. To each one of us, the Holy Virgin has entrusted a mandate to work for the salvation of our brothers in the world.”

(W.J. Chaminade. Letter of August 24, 1839)



We are seeking persons who
commit themselves
to fervently pray daily
for all Marianist vocations,

Will you join us?



**World
Council
of the
Marianist
Family**

www.marianist.org



“Let’s go, let us propagate for the greater glory of God. May the Name of the Lord be blessed, from East to West! May he be known everywhere, loved by all hearts, served by all creatures!”

(Adèle de Trenquelléon, Letter 450.6)