

MARIANIST FAMILY WORLD DAY OF THE MARIANIST VOCATION

World Council of the Marianist Family

March 25th 2012



LETTER FROM THE WORLD COUNCIL OF THE MARIANIST FAMILY

Dear brothers and sisters,

The World Council of the Marianist Family, meeting in Rome in November of 2011, decided to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for Marianist Vocations on March 25, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

Here is what the World Council said in its document about this Day:

*“We desire to continue emphasizing its importance and we wish to give it a more specific character. For this purpose, we are establishing March 25, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, as the **World Day of the Marianist Vocation**. If we have chosen this date it is because on that day that we celebrate the vocation of Mary and her “yes,” just as we celebrate the “yes” of the Word to God’s plan of salvation. The Marianist vocation in all its forms is best understood in the light of the Annunciation, which is fundamental for the understanding and integration of our charism into our lives. This new World Marianist Day will be the occasion for prayer in common with the Family.*

So let us not miss this event with the Family. Each of our branches needs the support of the fervent prayer of each one of us in order to grow, to be renewed and to develop. On the 25th of March let our prayer rise unanimously from the four corners of the world. Let us listen to how the Word of life resounded in the heart of Mary when, at the “yes” of his Mother, he responded within her: “Behold, here I am.” Let a new missionary drive renew our personal and communitarian Marianist vocation.

We are offering a document as a guide to meditation, to reflection, to personal or collective prayer.

Together, with Mary, let us celebrate, pray and listen to what the Spirit is saying to us.

Cordially,

Christiane Barbaux

For the World Council of the Marianist Family

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER

March 25 reminds us of the announcement of the Lord made to Mary of Nazareth, the announcement according to which She had been chosen to bear His Son, the Son of God, Jesus!

That memory brings us together as the Marianist Family, passionately devoted to the Kingdom, to continue keeping alive the presence of Jesus today, the plan of his beloved Father.

Throughout this day, Mary will be the center of our contemplation and of our prayer for vocations.





For reflection and interiorization

a) With the New Testament in the hands and in the heart...

• *A vocational theology*

- It is God who calls...
- Jesus takes the initiative:
 - + "Come with me..."
 - + "Set out into the deep..."
 - + "You have not chosen me,
I have chosen you..."

Mt 4:19

Lk 5:4

Jn 15:16

• *A vocational spirituality:*

- Gratuitousness of the call
- ... without merit on our part:
 - + "...he was calling those whom he wanted..."
 - + "... he chose twelve from among them..."

Mk 3:13

Lk 6:13

• *A vocational pedagogy:*

- To live with Jesus...
- And to work with Him for the Kingdom:
 - + (he called them) ... "to live with him"
 - + "I will make you fishers of men"

Mk 3:14

Mt 4:19

Sharing

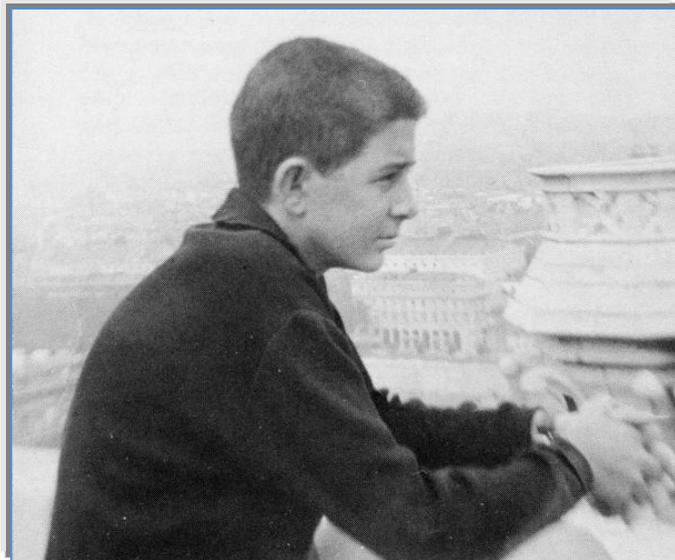


- After a generous time for personal reflection,
Share your reflections, first in three small groups,
and then all together,
- *What implications do these words and attitudes of Jesus have
for my Marianist life... and for vocation ministry?*



b) And with Marianist witnesses of our time

The Venerable Faustino Pérez-Manglano
Of Valencia (Spain), (1946-1963)



“My Mother, help me, you who succeed at everything. Christ, my ideal is going to be to live always united with you so that each day is closer to the goal of my vocation: to be a religious at the service of people for the love of Christ.

Mother, help me to attain my ideal”
(Diary, June 22, 1961)

Miguel Ángel Quiroga, S.M. (1972-1998)

Colombian Marianist religious,
Murdered by paramilitaries in Lloró, Chocó

His prayer

*Lord Jesus, unite your life to mine,
Unite our lives with the lives of the rest,
So that I might know how to share and to be a
brother
And to continue to build up in this world
The kingdom of God our Father,
In justice, life and liberation
For the poor and the oppressed,
By following in your resurrected footsteps
through our Marianist community.
Amen.*





WITH MARY OF NAZARETH AT THE CENTER OF OUR CONTEMPLATION

Recalling that day in Nazareth of Galilee

Important:

- Arrange the meeting place with taste and creativity,
- With the memory of Mary at the center,
- Reading the gospel of the Annunciation, in a shared form...



26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and

he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. 37 For nothing is impossible with God."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

PICTURE OF MARY NEXT TO THE GOSPEL
AND BEHIND THE FRAME, THE BRUSH STROKES



...thinking about vocation One's own and that which we await...

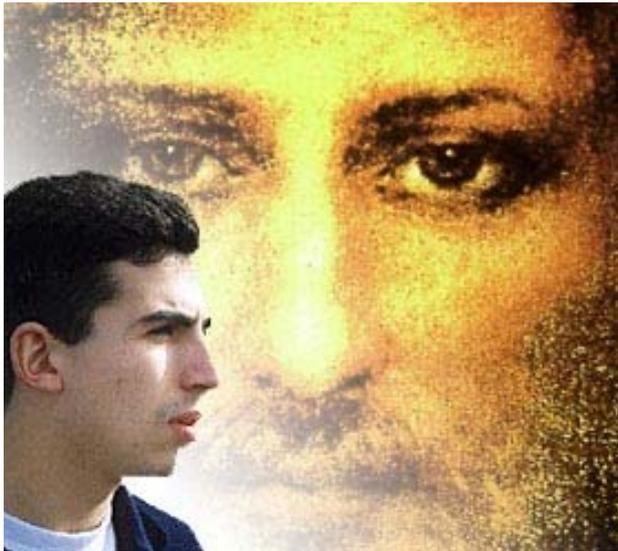
- The coordinates of time and space:
The sixth month of an unexpected pregnancy
And Nazareth, out of which can come nothing good (cf. Jn 1:46)
Let it bring us to think about the gratuitousness of vocation.
- An engaged virgin, a fifteen-year-old, according to custom,
In love with Joseph, before saying Yes to God
- REJOICE, the first word of God to humanity
Present in Mary: joy and happiness, essential to vocation
- Full of grace... graciously grateful, gratuitously...
God takes the initiative: vocation is gratitude,
thankfulness,
As Mary so well understood it in the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-49)
- Mary is responsible (*capable of responding*) and asks the angel (asks God):
An invitation to make of our vocation a responsibility
- **"I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word"**
And Mary gives of herself fully as in every true vocation





INSIGHTS OF A VOCATIONAL THEOLOGY

The vocation of every human being is to be a person, to discover the deep meaning of his life and of his transcendent end, and to discern how to respond freely to the will of God.



The mission of God begins when the Father sends his Son into the world to communicate the Good News of salvation. After the passion, death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, along with the Father, sends the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The Son and the Holy Spirit can be considered as “missionaries of the Father,” who carry out the consummation of his mission in the paschal mystery.

PROTAGONISTS OF THE CALLING AND SENDING

The Father's dream

To put his plan into effect, God the Father wants the participation of all his children so that, in freedom, they might cooperate with his dream that all humanity live together forever with Him. Thus begins the vocation-mission dynamic.

One of the first calls that God makes in the Bible is to Abraham (Gn 15:1-6) whom he invites to leave his own land and to go to a place that God will show him (cf. Gn 12:1). This personal encounter with the Lord was decisive for him, for at that moment the meaning of his very existence was decided. Abraham believed in God, as we see in his obedience to the call. The important thing that Abraham teaches us is to take to the road. In spite of not knowing where he is going, he is ready to overcome the difficulties. Throughout history, the Father continues to call all human beings to enter into a living relationship with God, which is supported by his promise of fidelity and covenant: “I shall be your God and you will be my people” (Lv 26:12; Ez 36:28; 37:27).

Later, at Mount Sinai, Moses is called by the Lord from the burning bush to carry out the mission of freeing the people of Israel, to take them out of slavery in Egypt and to lead them to the Promised Land (Ex3:7-10). Here again we see God, through Moses, call the People of Israel to bear witness to him before the other peoples. This shows that the



calling is not only on the personal level but must also be followed up in a communitarian way.

Later, Samuel is also called by the Lord, to whom he responds: “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening” (1Sm 3:10). God calls people in different ways to collaborate in his plans. For every person there is a vocation and each one is destined for a personal work, because to each one he has given a different talent (cf. Mt 25:14-30). The response of the human person must also be a response of trust in God.

The Son is sent to tell us who the Father is

When the gospel narrates the baptism of Jesus, it says that a voice from heaven proclaims: “You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased” (Mk 1:11; Mt 3:17; Lk 3:22). The filial relationship of Father-Son determines the meaning of Jesus’s existence. As the Holy Spirit comes down upon Jesus, he becomes conscious of his being, of his vocation, of his mission and of his destiny.



There is a perfect unity of action between Father and Son, for what the Father does the Son does likewise (cf. Jn 5:19). The only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, is he who makes him known to human beings (cf. Jn 1:18). Jesus tells us what the Father is like, and with his life he continues to show that one can love, even beyond rejection, violence, opposition, death on the cross. The Son’s gift of self, from the moment of his incarnation, death and resurrection shows also the Father’s gift of self from the moment of creation to the salvation of the human race.

Jesus begins to carry out his mission with the proclamation of the Gospel, the Good News of the Kingdom of God, the message of joy that provides grounds for the hope of the man of today, because God continues to trust human beings, opening the possibility of recreating the world as at the dawn of creation.

In the light of his mission, Jesus opts for the way of service, in favor of the poor and needy, of the fallen and sinners. At the sight of the people Jesus felt pity, because they were exhausted and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd, and he said to them: “The



harvest indeed is abundant, but the laborers are few; pray, then, to the Lord of the harvest that he send workers into his harvest” (Mt 9: 36-38).

Today, Jesus asks us to put ourselves with our talents at the service of others (Lk 19:12-13, 26), and invites us to help remedy the evils that afflict the human race, and to restore their dignity as children of God. This requires that God transform us by communicating to us his own Spirit.

Jesus also did something which is proper to God: taking the first step to come forward in our encounter with Him. The first thing Jesus does is to pray. Before calling his disciples, therefore, Jesus spent the entire night alone, in prayer and in listening to the will of the Father (Lk 6:12).

The Lord, at the beginning of his public life, called some fishermen, involved in their work on the shores of the lake of Galilee: “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19). Jesus showed them his messianic mission with numerous “signs” that demonstrated his love for men and the gift of the Father’s mercy; he taught them in word and with his life, so that they might be ready to continue his work of salvation; finally, “knowing that the hour had arrived for his passing from this world to the Father” (Jn 31:1), he entrusted to them the memorial of his death and resurrection and, before being taken up into heaven, he sent them out to the whole world to proclaim the gospel with the command: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19).

The call of Jesus to his disciples, “Follow me!” is joyful and demanding of sacrifice: he invites them to enter into his friendship, to listen closely to his Word and to live with Him; he teaches them the total gift of self to God and how to work for the spread of his Kingdom according to the Gospel. He calls everyone to share in that joy. “If the grain of wheat does not fall to the earth and die, it remains barren; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (Jn 12:24).

The Holy Spirit, the joy of God



The incarnation, the resurrection and the sending of Jesus take place thanks to the action of the Spirit. He is the fount of joy, of paschal faith and the nourishment of the mission undertaken. The Spirit makes his appearance as the one who precedes and accompanies Jesus in his mission.



And he does the same for the disciples of Jesus and for his Church. “I shall send to you from the Father the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father” (Jn 15:26). Beginning on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit started to act within the Church (AA 2:3). He continues to open the ways for the sending.

Jesus constitutes his apostles as witnesses and sends them out to announce the Gospel. That joy is what has to be made present in the proclamation, in the sacramental celebration, in the way of life, to show what the love of God means, the love that they themselves have experienced to its extreme. They accomplish it as apostles, and the rest of the Christians do it, each one with his own charism and personal vocation. In this way they prolong the mission of the Son and of the Spirit in a history and in a world that need the saving gifts for their renewal and happiness.

Psalm 94:7b-8a recommends: “Today: if you hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts.” If Jesus calls us today to proclaim the Kingdom of God through our Marianist charism, we must respond immediately and generously.

The Mother of God is also the model of vocation, Mary Most Holy, who at the announcement of the Angel sent by God told him: “I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). With these words Mary expresses her faith and her gift of self to God. She shows herself as the model of vocation for our times today.

c) Prayer for vocations

“O Jesus! Look with kindness upon the Marianist Family. You said to us: “Pray to the lord of the harvest that he send workers into his harvest.” We ask humbly ask you, let new vocations be born into our Marianist Family. Look with love upon the young people around us. May they live with joy and gratitude your call and commit themselves in a genuine response. We ask you this through the intercession of Mary, the woman of Yes, your Mother and our Mother.”





PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS (Blessed John Paul II)

Lord God, Heavenly Father, the harvest is great and the workers few. Send workers into your harvest. Send us many and holy preachers of the Gospel to proclaim your messages to all the nations. Receive our thanks for the vocations that through your Holy Spirit you continually bestow upon your Church. We beg you to fill with holiness the priests and missionaries, the consecrated persons in the religious life and the lay apostles. Grant strength and perseverance in their vocation to those preparing for the priesthood or religious life. Turn your eyes again upon our youth and invite them to follow you and grant them the readiness and generosity to listen to you. And the strength to leave all to follow your call.

THE MARIANIST FAMILY, CALLED TO BE SENT

A vocation is not the fruit of any human project or of a skilled organizational strategy. In its deepest reality, it is a gift of God, a mysterious initiative of the Lord, which comes into the life of a person, captivating it with the beauty of his love, and arousing in consequence a total and definitive gift of self to that divine love (cf. Jn 15:9,16).



Let us ask the Lord that our personal and communitarian witness of a life of friendship and intimacy with Christ, of total and joyful gift to God, always draw more persons to join the Family of Mary.



PRAYER FOR THE MARIANIST FAMILY

Father, look with kindness upon the Marianist Family that you have caused to arise within the Church through Blessed William Joseph Chaminade. Protect it from evil, make it holy and faithful to its alliance with Mary. Increase the number of its members and grant them the grace to live their mission in joy and confidence in spite of difficulties. We ask this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for those consecrated in the Society of Mary and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate

Lord Jesus, who said to us: "The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the lord of the harvest that he send workers into his harvest": we pray that you strengthen us in following the vocation to which you have called us. We pray especially for those whom you call to serve you as Marianist priests, sisters and brothers. Grant that they be ready to respond to the call to serve your people. We ask you this with Mary our Mother. Amen.

For those consacred in the Alliance Mariale

"So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:16).

Lord we ask you that they may feel themselves involved in every sorrow, in every injustice, and in every search for truth.

May they conform their lives to that of Christ, shaping them through the practice of the evangelical counsels.

Just as the leaven which causes all the flour to rise (cf. Mt 13:33), so may their lives be, at times silent and hidden, but always positive and stimulating, capable of generating hope for our brothers and sisters.

Lord, grant new vocations to the Alliance Mariale. With Mary, may Jesus be brought to the world by each one of them. Through their lives, may your light shine before men and your Name be glorified in every place and time. This we ask you with Mary, our Mother. Amen.

For the Members of the Marianist Lay Communities

"Do not be conformed to this world" (Rm 12:2)

Attentive to the call of John Paul II,¹ may our laity be mature Christian persons, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world.

¹ John Paul II, *to persons belonging to the ecclesial movements and to new communities, on the Vigil of Pentecost*, Osservatore Romano, Spanish edition, June 5, 1998).



May the Holy Spirit raise up new living ecclesial communities, Marianist communities within the bosom of our family, so that Jesus may be known, loved and served, as he was by Mary.

May the Yes of Mary support the response of those who are called to consecrate themselves to her to be her missionaries, through the witness of their lives, their faith and their charity.

We ask you this, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, with Mary our Mother. Amen.

PRAYER OF JOHN PAUL II (adapted)

Good Father, in Christ your Son you revealed to us your love, you embrace us as your children and offer to us the possibility of discovering, in your will, the features of our true self. Holy Father, You call us to be holy as you are holy. We ask you that your Church never lack holy lay persons who, docile to the action of the Holy Spirit, prepare the way for the encounter with you.

Merciful Father, give to our erring Humanity men and women who, through the witness of a transfigured life, in the image of your Son, walk happily with the rest of their brothers and sisters towards the heavenly homeland.

Our Father, with the voice of your Holy Spirit, and trusting in the maternal intercession of Mary, we ardently beg you: send families to your Church, who will be valiant witnesses of your infinite goodness. Amen!



On this World Day of the Marianist vocation let us reflect upon our own vocation:

- ***Are we living it to the maximum?***
- ***Are we caught in a holding pattern, like the disciples in the upper room?***
- ***Are we somewhere in between?***



PRAYERS

Grant, O Lord, that each of our young people know the road you have laid out for them,

- So that following their vocation, they might be completely happy.

Grant, O Lord, that many hear and follow the life of perfect charity,

- After the example of the Virgin Mary and of all the saints.

Inspire, O Lord, the thoughts and actions of youth,

- That they might collaborate docilely with your word.

You, O Lord, turned the fishermen of Galilee into apostles of your Kingdom,

- Send workers to your Church to continue the work of salvation.

Shine, O Lord, upon the world the light of your truth,

- Through the ministry of numerous and holy evangelizers.

Raise up, O Lord, enthusiastic missionaries of your word,

- So that the Gospel might be proclaimed even to the farthest ends of the earth.

You, O Lord, who have called us to collaborate with the Virgin Mary in her corredemptive mission,

- Inspire generous young persons to share our life of service of the Immaculate One.

Your martyrs, O Lord, did not hesitate to give their lives to be faithful to your call,

- Grant that there never lack in your Church heroic proclaimers of the Gospel.

